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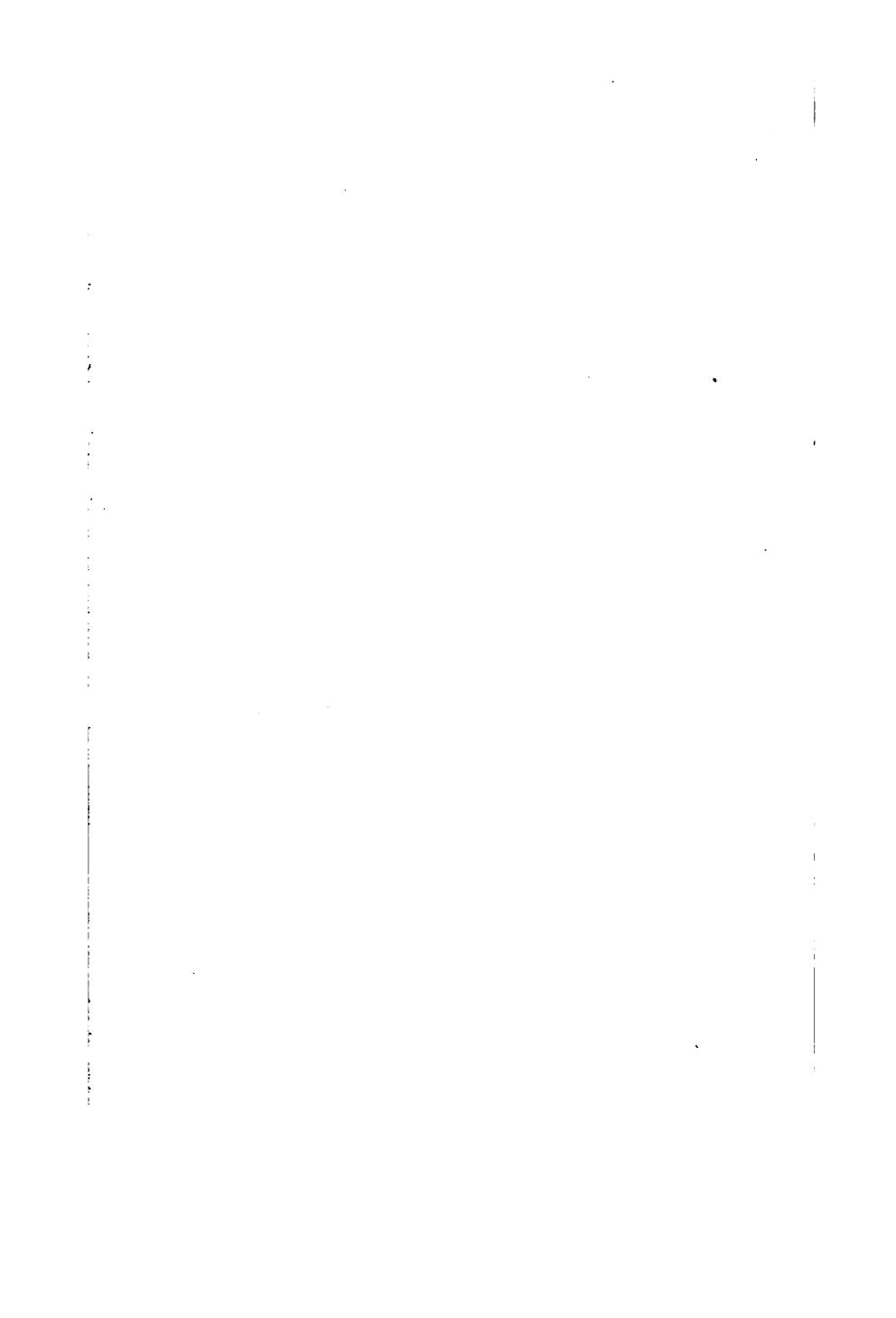
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CHRISTIANITY and HUMANITY.

A Series of Sermons

BY

THOMAS STARR KING.

EDITED BY

BY EDWIN P. WHITFIELD.



FOURTH EDITION.

BOSTON:

JAMES K. GOOD AND COMPANY

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MEMOIR.

THE writer of the sermons in this volume was widely distinguished as an eloquent preacher and lecturer ; but perhaps the affection and admiration which were attracted to him as a rare example of Christian manhood do more justice to his character than even these discourses can do to the intellect which was the offshoot and expression of it. Nobody more quickly converted chance acquaintances into warm friends. To know him was to love him. Persons of all grades of mind, culture, occupation, and disposition felt the effortless strength and charm of his rich and genial nature, from the common beggar who intruded into his study with his pathetic appeal for help, always kindly met, all the way up to such an intellectual giant as Agassiz, who came to converse with him on the question of the Divine Personality, a subject dear to the hearts of both preacher and naturalist. He thus necessarily made a host of friends ; and one of these now attempts to give a brief summary of the incidents of his life and the qualities of his character.

Thomas Starr King was born in the city of New York, on December 17, 1824. His father

was of English, his mother of German, descent. Both were characterized by largeness and generosity of soul. The Rev. Thomas Farrington King, the father, was a Universalist minister of the Restorationist type, and was noted among the clergymen of his denomination for the fervor with which he preached self-renunciation for the sake of Christ, and the cheerful way in which he submitted to the hardships of poverty in his zeal to prove his doctrine by his conduct. Like his son, he was the ever-ready victim of what are called unworthy objects of charity, that is, of persons who need charity the most. For example, when he was settled in Portsmouth, N. H., he was once called down from his study by a rough-looking Irishman, who had established himself in the sitting-room, and who demanded help. "What do you want?" Mr. King mildly inquired. "Money enough, your riverence, to get to Boston." "Why do you call on me rather than on the Roman Catholic priest?" "Well, I thought I'd give you the preference." "Where did you come from last?" "Concord." "In what part of Concord?" "Well, your riverence, I think they call it the State's Prison; but mind, I was n't put in there for any dirty larceny, but for having, in an unguarded moment, just laid my hands on a countryman of mine in a way they call manslaughter." With the fluent eloquence characteristic of his race, he proceeded to urge his claim. The Universalist minister only knew that

the fellow was in want, was disposed to do better in the future, and was confident he could obtain work if he was supplied with the means of getting to Boston. The money was given, though it stinted the pastor's family of some minor necessities. The Irishman, who was sound to the core as to the dogmas of his church, overwhelmed the Universalist minister with thanks, wishing him all blessings in this world, and adding, with a roguish twinkle in his eyes, "And may ye be in heaven a fortnight before the Divil knows ye 're dead!" The recipient of this equivocal blessing had sufficient sense of humor to understand how the man was grateful for the service done to him, but was still careful to preserve his own position as a devout believer in the church which looks on Universalists as outcasts from the heavenly kingdom.

It is plain that such a clergyman, when he died, would leave little to his family. From 1835 to 1839 he was the minister of a flourishing Universalist society in Charlestown, Mass., and was much beloved by his congregation. He died at the age of forty-two, living long enough to witness the precocity of his son, and to feel sure of his future eminence. Indeed, the boy had early manifested singular aptitude for study, and equally singular obedience to every call of duty. He was as conscientious as he was vivacious; full of fun and frolic, yet endowed with a premature purity and thoughtfulness which kept him free from the coarseness, roughness, and disregard of the claims

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of others, which are apt to characterize lads of a mercurial temperament.

His education was desultory, but, with his quickness of apprehension, he acquired Latin and French at an early age. More than this, he seemed at once to perceive that the acquisition of a language was valuable chiefly as it opened the door to an acquaintance with its literature.

At the age of fifteen, when his father died, he became the head of the family, and subordinated his hunger for knowledge to the pressing practical needs of his new position. He became a clerk in a dry-goods store, then a teacher in a grammar-school, then a clerk in the Charlestown Navy Yard, devoting his gains to the support of those whom his father's death had left in straitened pecuniary circumstances. His leisure was pretty equally devoted to study and social enjoyments. Theodore Parker made King's acquaintance when the latter was about nineteen; and speaks of him, in his diary, as a "capital fellow, who reads French, Spanish, Latin, Italian, a little Greek, and begins German." He adds, "A good listener." The youth evidently had his ears open to the talk of such a scholar and social force; but though he listened respectfully, without debating Mr. Parker's dogmatic judgments, he had his eyes open as well. At this period of his life he modestly heard what the eminent men who made his acquaintance had to say; he was reticent as to his own opinions on the subjects they conversed about; he lured them

on to pour out their thoughts by the eager interest which sparkled in his eyes as he looked up into their faces ; and it was only in letters to friends of his own age that he ventured his criticisms on the statements they made and the principles they expounded. Earnestly desirous to learn from other minds, his mental hospitality never impaired his mental independence. This combination of eager receptiveness with critical judgment is the condition of that vigorous and rapid assimilation of knowledge which really increases intellectual power.

The studies in which he most delighted were metaphysics and theology, especially their connection with each other in the history and philosophy of religion. At the period when he entered upon what may be called his intellectual life, the works of Cousin were exercising a great deal of influence on popular New England thought, and were read with special sympathy by those who sympathized with the humanitarian theology of Dr. Channing. Cousin inspired King, as a boy, with a passion for general principles ; and the eclecticism of the eloquent Frenchman, as it proceeded on the ground of doing justice to every philosophical thinker by placing his leading thought into right relations with the results of the thinking of the whole philosophic world, at once attracted and expanded his inborn tendency to intellectual toleration and comprehensiveness. Among the two hundred sermons I have more or less carefully

examined in order to provide the materials of this volume, I have been constantly surprised by the fact that, strong as King was in his convictions of the truth of what may be called his own Universalist-Unitarian belief, he was ever eager and ready to recognize and interpret the faith of churches and denominations most opposed to his own. Whenever he was called upon to defend his own creed against an aggressive movement of the ministers of the Orthodox dogmas, he commonly began with a statement of the value of the ideas which his opponents stood for exclusively, feeling that they responded to needs of classes of Christians which his own cherished doctrines did not meet; and whenever, in the fervor of controversy, he was betrayed into any of the exclusiveness he was combating, I am convinced that every intolerant word he uttered, in the heat of the moment, left a bad taste in his mouth after it had heedlessly passed his lips. For this general disposition to interpret rather than to denounce opinions which were at variance with his own, he was, probably, much indebted to his early reading of the works of Cousin. This disposition is shown in so many of his sermons that it must have become a second nature. Running through all his ministry at Charlestown and Boston, it is specially observable in his first sermon on assuming the pastorate of the Unitarian Church in San Francisco. Indeed, it is repeated so often that it at last becomes almost wearisome; though why such

a principle, involving, as it does, the only hope we can have of a universal Christian Church, bound together by the spirit of Christ rather than by dogmas and ceremonies which subordinate his spirit to the forms in which it has been organized, should become wearisome, proves that the sin still predominates over the saintliness of even the chosen persons who are the most eminent embodiments of the Christian life in our numerous distracted churches. King felt, to the very core of his heart, that the only true Church was an ideal one, which might in the future be organized by a union of all men and women who really loved God and man, and acted in accordance with their belief. Meanwhile he heartily honored every human being, whatever might be his dogmatic belief, whose life and work were in harmony with the beneficent spirit of Christ.

This premature comprehensiveness of mind was deepened and extended by the thoughtful reading of Channing. It is difficult for young men of the present day, disciplined by the study of Huxley, Tyndall, and Darwin, of Strauss, Bauer, and Renan, to understand the magic which Channing exercised, thirty-five or forty years ago, on sensitive youths, born and bred in "liberal" families, who came into contact with his devout spirit, and who were kindled by his doctrine of the dignity of human nature, his exaltation of moral over intellectual excellence, his confident statement of the never-pausing desire of the Infinite

to come into cleansing communion with his finite children, and his emphatic announcement of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. As a youth, King had no vices to prevent his cordial reception of the moral and spiritual enthusiasm which animated the discourses of this great preacher. His mind quivered with a new delight as he felt the freshening breeze of Channing's religious genius stir the deeps of his soul. Afterwards he mastered the results of the great German and French critics of the Bible. To many of our present young students, exegesis practically means exit Jesus ; but King, in all his eager quest of truth, and dutiful acknowledgment of the service which the great German theologians had rendered to the rational interpretation of the Scriptures, never lost his original hold on Christ Jesus as the express image of God,—as the Son who reveals to us the Father,—as the ideal embodiment of a perfected Humanity, pointing

“ To that far-off, divine event

To which the whole creation moves.”

Such a person had a natural call to the ministry ; and, though he had been trained in no divinity school, his self-taught, self-disciplined mind was filled with a larger store of well-arranged knowledge than ordinary theological students then brought from the teachings of either Professor Park or Professor Noyes. He had the advantage of being the personal friend of one of the most accomplished scholars that the Universalist de-

nomination has produced, the Rev. Dr. Hosea Ballou (2d), — a friendship which years only deepened and made more intimate ; and, through his wonderfully accurate reports of the three courses of lectures on Natural Theology, which the Rev. Dr. James Walker delivered at the Lowell Institute, he became personally acquainted with that acutest of metaphysicians among contemporary Unitarian divines. Both of these eminent men exercised a marked influence on his rapidly forming mind and character. In addition to these, he had all those professors of theology, philosophy, and literature who have left, in books, undying records of their thoughts and lives ; and, in imagination, he discoursed with Plato, Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Kant, Reid, and Hamilton, with Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Hooker, Taylor, De Wette, and Martineau, with Virgil, Tasso, Shakespeare, Milton, and Goethe, as though they were not only authors to be read, but august persons who deigned to count him among their circle of acquaintances. These dead or distant teachers were all alive and present to him ; and he studied under their guidance as though they were lecturing to him from the professor's desk. The result was, that, though his scholarship, at the age of twenty-two, was not as deep as it was broad, yet, owing to his singular swiftness of apprehension, it was larger than most educated preachers bring from the university and divinity school to the pulpit.

•

His first public address was delivered at Medford, Mass., on the 4th of July, 1845. His first sermon was preached at Woburn, in the autumn of the same year. Boyish as he was in appearance, he at once became noted as a preacher of peculiar attractiveness ; and, after serving a short apprenticeship in filling the pulpit of a small Universalist society in Boston, during the absence of its pastor, he accepted, on the 2d of August, 1846, a call from the large and flourishing Universalist Church in Charlestown to be its pastor. Thus, before he had arrived at the age of twenty-two, he succeeded to the same pulpit which his father had filled at the time of his death, at the age of forty-two. His immediate predecessor was the Rev. Edwin H. Chapin, who had, during his ministry, exhibited the germs of all those qualities which have since raised him to a high rank among the most renowned pulpit and platform orators of the United States. King's slender figure was in as marked contrast to Chapin's stalwart frame as the "sweet reasonableness" of his persuasive eloquence was to the rush and vehemence of Chapin's glowing arguments and appeals ; but he still satisfied the raised expectations of his hearers, and during the two years he held the position of their pastor he steadily grew in mental and moral stature.

Still there was one trouble which vexed him in his pastorate. His hearers had known him as a boy ; and he came to preach to them as a grad-

uate, not of the college and divinity school, but of the dry-goods store and the Navy Yard. Then he was the least clerical, in the formal sense of the word, of human beings; and, indeed, so he continued to the end of his life. His inborn joyousness of temperament burst forth in the social meetings of the society, sometimes in all the fine extravagances of mirth; and certain staid people probably shook their heads, when they saw their boyish-looking minister indulging in all the exuberance of boyish animal spirits. In the pulpit, by the beds of the sick and the dying, in all the scenes which test a minister's helpful sympathy with grief, suffering, penitence, or aspiration, he showed himself profoundly and tenderly serious; in his articles in the *Universalist Quarterly*, and in his lecture on Goethe, he exhibited a seriousness of the intellect the only fault of which was that it seemed to be beyond his years; but in ordinary intercourse with his parishioners he recognized no distinction between clergyman and layman, and never put on gravity when there was no gravity in the occasion. It was impossible for him to assume what he did not feel merely to accommodate himself to the etiquette of his profession; and his feelings were so acute that at the least call for a serious mood his flexible nature became instantly absorbed in it, and the tears would glisten in his eyes almost before the smile had left his lips. It did not require for this transformation the presence of calamity or

sin ; the utterance of a noble thought, the sight of a great aspect of nature, would effect it. I remember one occasion when I was his companion in a wagon, which he was driving through one of the roughest roads amid the wildest scenery of the White Mountains. The talk between us had been very hilarious, when suddenly we came upon a magnificent view. The reins quickly loosened in his hands ; his eyes, his whole countenance, became irradiated by that peculiar light which indicates the complete absorption of the soul in the beauty and grandeur it contemplates. After two or three tilts of the vehicle, each of which threatened its overthrow, I ventured to suggest to him that, as a clergyman, he doubtless had a proper and commendable disregard, if not contempt, for this life, but that, as a layman, it was not to be expected that I could fully share his theological feeling, or contemplate without apprehension that abrupt close to my physical existence which I saw was momentarily impending, and that therefore I should be much obliged if he would hand me the reins. This was said with all becoming mock gravity ; and he came back to individual consciousness with a burst of laughter which made the rocks and woods ring with merry echoes. Indeed, the tears and laughter, the solemnity and the hilarity, of this lovable creature came equally from his sympathetic heart.

There was no positive discontent with King's preaching at Charlestown, and there could not be ;

for his reputation so steadily increased that, from the time of the second year of his ministry to the day of his death, he may be said to have had constantly in his pockets tempting invitations from other religious societies to leave the society he served. He was invited by the Unitarian Society in New York, of which Dr. Dewey had been the pastor, to be their minister, provided he would spend a year in the Cambridge Divinity School before he entered their pulpit. This offer, burdened with such a condition, King very properly refused to accept. Another call, from the Fourth Universalist Church of the same city, was also declined. The motive which really induced him to leave his Charlestown society was freely expressed to me and to other friends. "The fact is, I feel," he said, "that there is a certain incongruity in my position there. I preach to mature and aged men and women, who have seen me as a boy in my father's pew, and who can hardly conceive of me as a grown man. I necessarily cannot command in that pulpit the influence which a stranger would wield. It is best for them that I should vacate the office, though they have always been kind and considerate to me, though my relations to them are of the most pleasant nature, and though some of them are bound to me in the closest ties of personal friendship."

Meanwhile the Hollis Street Church, a Unitarian congregation of Boston, with a history behind it stretching back to the year 1732, and number-

ing among its former pastors such men as Mather Byles, Horace Holley, and John Pierpont, was earnestly desirous of obtaining King as its minister. The church had for some time been distracted by internal dissensions on questions of temperance and antislavery, and had suffered from many secessions. Indeed, it seemed that the organization which had endured so long was threatened with dissolution. But among its members was an able, learned, astute lawyer, Henry H. Fuller, an earnest Unitarian, and an equally earnest champion of the Hollis Street Church. He could not endure the thought that the society should die, and he fixed upon the young Charlestown divine as the person to save it, never relaxing his efforts until he had succeeded. In the spring of 1848 Mr. King was invited to be its pastor. He declined, after due consideration, in June of the same year; and immediately after sailed for Fayal to recruit his health, which had been impaired by the studies, labors, and anxieties of his ministry. On his return the Hollis Street Society renewed its application; and Mr. Fuller, especially, never intermitted his arguments and appeals until he had convinced King that it was his duty to comply. On October 6, 1848, he accordingly accepted the call; on the next day he notified his society, in a manly and tender letter, of the fact; and on the first Sunday in November, a month before his installation, he assumed his new office. On the 17th of December, eleven days after his installa-

tion, he was married to Miss Julia Wiggin, of East Boston.

His happy home in Boston soon became an intellectual centre, where many of the most distinguished Unitarian and Universalist clergymen delighted to meet him and each other, and where his winning hospitality—a hospitality of the mind and heart as well as of the table, a hospitality which lavished on his friends everything he was as well as everything he had—delighted all who had the good fortune to partake of it. Thither also flocked numbers of young students of theology who have since become Christian forces, and also hundreds of miscellaneous persons who were in need of his help, his counsel, or a portion of his ever-slender stock of money. His door, indeed, stood wide open to everybody who sought either his companionship or his aid. It was a common occurrence that while dictating a sermon to his amanuensis he would be called to leave his work in order to welcome a visitor, sometimes a common beggar, sometimes a doctor of divinity; and after an hour or half an hour had elapsed he would return serenely to the library, and proceed to finish the half-completed sentence which the visitor had interrupted, though it seemed so entangled in commas or semicolons as to demand an entire recasting. Indeed, his sweet and gentle patience was proof against every annoyance, even of that annoyance which is found to irritate the temper of the saintliest thinkers, namely, the vio-

lent entrance into the scholar's study, sacred as it should be to devout and silent meditation, of those sacrilegious thieves of time who labor under the double condemnation of being at once intrusive strangers and voluble bores. During the eleven years of King's ministry in Boston it is probable that not a single person, however low down in the scale of being, ever left his cordial presence with a sensible diminution of his self-respect.

Had the new minister adequately understood his task he would not have undertaken it. He preached to a remnant of the old powerful society, and he might properly have taken for the text of his first sermon that which Dean Swift was said to have selected when he preached before the Worshipful Society of the Tailors, namely, "A remnant of ye shall be saved." In his "Words at Parting," in 1859, he confessed that if he had known "the precise state of the case,—how few of the pews were rented, how strong was the prejudice against the church and the very building on account of the long troubles, and how little hope for the future of the parish was felt outside of the committee that conducted the correspondence with him,—he would not have dared so great a venture as an acceptance of the call." But Mr. Fuller was right in perceiving that all that was needed to draw a society together was a magnet. In a comparatively short time the empty pews began to fill, and a new and strong society was established on the ruins of the old

one. The pastor gave the parish eleven years of his life ; and could justly congratulate himself, in the last sermon he delivered in the church, on speaking to five times as many parishioners as listened to his first. The reason for this growth is not to be found in the preacher's accommodating himself to the opinions and prejudices of his congregation, for he was repeatedly driven by a sense of duty to proclaim unpalatable and unrecognized principles which hurt the feelings of many of those who could not help loving, admiring, and respecting him ; but it was due to the organizing power in the individuality and soul of the pastor himself. " Preaching the truth in love," he could safely surrender himself to any impulse of righteous wrath without debasing it by any intermixture of moral malignity. It was impossible for him not to preach politics from the pulpit, because from 1850 to 1860 politics had invaded the province of morals and religion. The questions up for discussion did not relate so much to rendering unto the American Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, as to the pretensions of the American Cæsar to occupy the domain of those things which were specially reserved as "the things" appertaining to God. Among these were the resistance to the Free Soil Movement ; the Fugitive Slave Law ; the Dred Scott Decision ; the elaborate attempts of politicians to introduce into politics the idea that the Bible sanctioned slavery, and that Christ came, not more to save

the souls of whites than to enslave the bodies of blacks ; that it was impertinent in clergymen to doubt that human brotherhood and the fatherhood of God were to be interpreted in a sense which would not interrupt cordial business relations between the North and the South ; and that the pulpit was to be silent while the principles of Christian morality and Christian philanthropy were violated in the maxims of liberticide which guided the dominant politics of the country, and inspired many of the acts of its administration.

On such themes as these Starr King preached as duty impelled him to preach, and as events furnished him with the appropriate occasions for manly utterance. It was understood that his resignation, if offence was taken, was always at the disposal of the Parish Committee. The most powerful of his sermons of this kind was that on the decision of the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case. The dissenting opinion of Mr. Justice Curtis, questioning the truth of the facts as well as the validity of the reasoning on which the majority of the court relied, gave him the shelter of that eminent jurist's authority for the soundness of his arguments. He was thus enabled to allow free way to the rush of righteous wrath which urged him to stigmatize what he considered the enormous crime of a court of justice passing beyond the proper limitations of the case before it in order gratuitously to legalize lies and institute iniquity. In the delivery of parts of this dis-

course his auditors had at least the opportunity to learn that their minister was a greater orator than they hitherto had dreamed. At times his ruddy face became white under the impatient pressure of the moral passion which filled his soul ; his eyes shone with a lustre that had never been seen in them before ; and tones came from his voice which surprised those who were most familiar with its range and power. Some of his friends in the society doubtless felt hurt at such an outburst from the pulpit, dauntlessly arraiging the majority of the Supreme Court of the land as betrayers of justice for a political purpose ; but nothing was said to indicate that there would be any falling away of parishioners, or that the independent minister would have the slightest cause to send in his resignation.

Indeed, the pulpit of the time was so thoroughly abolitionized that it was hardly possible to obtain a clergyman, to whom people would consent to listen, who was not tinctured with anti-slavery opinions. King used to tell a story of a proslavery acquaintance of his, who lived in one of the towns adjoining Boston, and who was mourning over what he called the "nigger" harangues that he had to hear, Sunday after Sunday. "Why did you settle him?" King asked. "Well," was the despairing reply, "we found that we must have either an abolitionist or a darned fool, and you must feel, Mr. King, that we could n't have a darned fool, — now could we?"

It is needless to add that King solaced him as well as he could, ironically sympathizing with the dilemma in which the parish was placed, and assuring him that, on the whole, he thought it would be better for them to have a bright preacher of righteousness, who might occasionally make them scream, rather than a stupid preacher of unrighteousness who would constantly make them yawn.

The truth is, that the Hollis Street Society, though made up of persons of widely different varieties of political opinion, loved its pastor, and could not help loving him. The acuteness of moral sensibility, the depth of tender feeling for the suffering, the aggrieved, and the oppressed, which impelled him on certain occasions to assail pernicious political tendencies and bad acts of the government, were unintermittingly displayed in his personal sympathy with all the members of his parish who were tried by those afflictions which specially test the heart and soul of the minister. He was cheer to the despondent, hope to the despairing, comfort to the mournful, fellowship to the desolate. The words he uttered from the pulpit were inspiring and full of spiritual nutriment; but the words he breathed into the ears of the remorseful and the penitent, the words he spoke in the chambers of the sick and over the confined remains of the dead, were the words which bound him most intimately to those of his society who had been bowed down by those afflictions of life

which fall on Democrat and Republican alike. And then, in his ordinary visits to the homes of his parishioners, it was felt that he brought the outer sunshine with him into the room ; or, rather, it may be said, he brought with him the finer and rarer sunshine of the soul. The complaint of those members of his parish who were sometimes disturbed by his emphatic utterance of antislavery opinions was not so much that he shocked their political creed, as that his engagements as a lecturer interfered with the frequency of his visits to their homes.

His parish, therefore, understood him. Its members instinctively felt that it pained him to give pain to any of them, and that, if he affronted their political prejudices, he did it from the same humanity which led him to sympathize so cordially with them in their hours of sorrow and calamity. They also came to know that his spiritual was so exquisitely connected with his bodily organization, that any wrong done to a person or a class or a race, any insult offered, in a legislative assembly or on a bench of judges, to a great moral principle or philanthropic aspiration, gave him exquisite physical pain. His body instinctively responded to any wound inflicted on his soul. When he read of an outrage committed in a Southern State on the rights of the negro, his imagination at once realized the scene. He changed places with the sufferer, and became himself the victim of the brutality he abhorred.

His own flesh quivered under the lash which fell on the back of the slave. When Anthony Burns was marched through the streets of Boston to be returned to his owner, Mr. King probably endured a sharper mental agony than cut into the soul of the poor bondman who was made the centre of the spectacle. At times this sensibility to the woes of others was not confined to persons whose sufferings were unjustly inflicted. I cannot call to mind what his general opinions were on the question of capital punishment ; but one afternoon, in a company assembled at a house by the sea-shore, the newspapers arrived with the details of the execution of a convicted murderer, who certainly deserved hanging if hanging were justifiable under any circumstances. The guests were merciful people, yet each seemed to read his paper with a kind of moral satisfaction that justice had been done to such a criminal. After King had read a dozen sentences, I noticed that the journal slipped from his hands, the blood all at once dropped out of his cheeks, a faintness seized him as if he had been stricken with a deadly sickness at his heart, and he silently withdrew from his companions, incapable either of objecting to their judgment of the case or of sympathizing with it. He was evidently overcome by the horror of contemplating the scene at the gallows as it was vividly reproduced by his imagination, and by the additional horror of thinking of such a darkened soul passing into the mysterious region beyond

the grave without exhibiting the remotest sign of possessing a moral nature. A minute before he had taken up the paper he was in his most hilarious mood ; but when he reappeared, after an hour's absence, there was no mirth in him, and no mirth to be extracted from him. He remained listless and unnerved during the whole evening. The company was joyous ; but the criminal dangling on the gallows was still visible to his mental eye, and his thoughts were evidently far off from the merry noise sounding in his ears, and fixed, in a kind of wondering despair, on what was occurring to the soul of the reprobate, thus ignominiously released from its mortal tenement of clay to meet its Creator and Judge.

It is not to be understood that the main purpose of Mr. King was to criticise political parties from his pulpit. The vast majority of the two hundred sermons which have passed under the eye of the present editor are devoted to the inculcation of the principles of practical and spiritual Christianity, as they relate to the right method of building up Christian character in the individual soul. They were intended to meet the wants of the members of his congregation in everything that respected their conduct in private life and in the pursuits of business. They were, in the most intense New England meaning of the word, "searching" sermons. Frivolity, selfishness, envy, malice, avarice, inhumanity, licentiousness,—

all sins, indeed, which interposed a screen between the human soul and God,—were relentlessly exposed by an analysis which pierced down, through layer after layer of religious self-deception and self-satisfaction, to the ugly vice nestling in seeming security beneath the smooth and elegant proprieties which hid it from ordinary view. To awaken every boy and girl, every man and woman, who listened to him, to a consciousness of their sins of commission and omission was the object of this Christian pastor ; and his way of doing it was by appealing to the reason which underlies passionate unreasonableness, to the good will partially suppressed by self-will, to the possibilities of the soul for good amid all its wild deviations into evil. He specially relied on his power of persuading those who would have been proof against all invective. By an imagination which ever dutifully accompanied his probing analysis, he vividly exhibited the horror of the state of sin,—its aridity, barrenness, hopelessness, helplessness, the absence in it of real life when physical existence is shut out from the freshening life which God pours into souls which strive to be in harmony with him ; and then, with the same vitalizing imagination, he pictured the bliss of beings that, even on this earth, anticipate the “beatitude past utterance” of the heavenly state, by receiving through their senses, through their intellects, through their hearts, through their souls, the messages which the Divine Spirit sends to them, not only in the

words of the Bible, but in the hues, sounds, and forms of the visible universe He has created. This was the dominant tone of his preaching ; but he was also ever ready to defend, by argument and by ingenious interpretation of Scripture texts and the facts of ecclesiastical history, the reasonableness and duty of forming such congregations of Christian worshippers as the one he specially addressed, — a congregation which stood as a representative and result of the Unitarian and the Universalist revolt against the dogmas of the large majority of Christian churches. As a theological controversialist, however, he was more comprehensive than the great body of the denominational ministers with whose doctrines he agreed. He was tolerant of dogmas which he could not accept, because he tried to understand what he criticised. His first question, when he prepared to assail an "orthodox" doctrine, was this : "Out of what needs or experiences of human nature did this dogma spring ?" There is a latent modesty observable under his most vehement affirmations of the validity of his own conceptions of theological truth. At least, he always attempted to account for the origin of the beliefs he aimed to overthrow.

Perhaps his full effectiveness as a pastor was somewhat impaired by the circumstances which impelled him to become a lecturer before lyceums. His popularity as a lecturer was very great ; his lectures extended his real parish east from Boston

to Bangor, and west from Boston to Chicago ; but he lectured at the period when a fee of ten or fifteen or twenty-five dollars was considered an adequate remuneration for a discourse delivered within twenty miles of Boston, and a fee of fifty dollars for one delivered in Albany, Syracuse, or Buffalo. The result was, that, though he labored hard and was warmly applauded, he received during a whole season less than lecturers of his high rank now sometimes receive in a month. He began with a lecture on "Goethe." During the whole term of his settlement over Hollis Street Church he was overwhelmed with invitations. His lecture on "Substance and Show" almost equalled in popularity that of Wendell Phillips on "The Lost Arts." The subjects he afterwards selected, such as "Socrates," "Sight and Insight," "The Laws of Disorder," obtained an almost equal reputation. But lecturing, though it may seem to be the mere amusement of the leisure of a professional man, is, when followed up night after night, a terrible drain on the physical vitality of the most robust constitutions. The addition to Mr. King's income was comparatively small, amounting perhaps to fifteen hundred dollars annually, or about a fourth of what a lecturer of equal popularity would receive now. This sum was gained at the expense of deducting many years from his invaluable life. The mere speaking was the least part of the exhausting labor. The journeying from place to place ; the passage

from lecture-rooms stiflingly hot to sleeping-rooms bitterly cold ; the loss of appetite or the absence of the proper food to gratify it ; the inevitable coughs and colds resulting from necessary exposure ; the disturbance of the whole system arising from the breaking-up of all the habits of ordinary life ; the long, vacant days in the cars, with the head in the torrid and the feet in the frigid zone ; the constant fret and anxiety lest something might be going wrong in his home or his parish, and he a hundred or a thousand miles away, — these wore on a frame too delicately organized to stand such a strain on it without injury. But he knew that life was not given to him for the purpose of spending it even in enjoyments which are innocent and artistic ; and his cheery temperament converted drudgery itself into a kind of delight. As he was ever ready to lay down his life when the occasion demanded the sacrifice, so he was as ready to wear it out, at the call of duty, by the slow suicide of over-work.

The summer vacations of Mr. King were spent either at Pigeon Cove, Cape Ann, or in some village in the White Mountains. After comparing, in alternate seasons, the sea-shore with the mountains, he at last decided for the latter as on the whole the more conducive to his health, both of mind and body. His usual summer residence was at Gorham, N. H. That village appeared to him a good place to reside in, and at the same time furnished an excellent point from which to

make excursions into every valley and up every height of the whole mountain region. A series of Letters to the "Boston Transcript," edited by his friend and parishioner Mr. Daniel N. Haskell, ended in becoming the foundation of his picturesque volume, published in 1859, on "The White Hills." As this was the best of guidebooks, and at the same time a book which supplied visitors with all the emotions they ought to feel and all the imaginations they ought to shape, in viewing magnificent scenery, it at once became popular. It is still considered the most inspiring companion which a person of taste, feeling, and capacity for enthusiasm can take with him in exploring "the Switzerland of New England."

Even the book on the "White Hills," however, abounding as it does in scenes of description which Ruskin might be willing to indorse for their truth to fact and truth to feeling, does not do full justice to Mr. King's experiences as a tourist. His eye for character was as keen as his eye for scenery; and he could not be a week in any remote village before all its "originals" flocked to him, and were gently and benignantlly tempted to unveil their natures to his sympathetic humor. He accordingly brought back from every vacation memories of a score of new characters, which, as he reproduced them in all their mental and moral processes, and in all their peculiar ways of individualizing the Yankee dialect, were recognized by his friends as little masterpieces of humorous

characterization. Indeed, if rightly disposed in an appropriate plot, they might have made the fortune of an American novel or comedy, solidly true as they were to our rustic or seafaring life. Nothing delighted him more than to come in direct contact with persons who had been all their days far away from the ordinary ministrations of religion, and who had hewn their maxims of ethics and metaphysics, of humanity and theology, out of their rude personal experiences in forcing a churlish soil to yield its reluctant harvest of grain, or in coaxing a pitiless ocean to yield its ever-fluctuating harvest of fish. Such men hastened to King, the city clergyman, with the purpose at first of chaffing him as a clerical prig ; but his beaming face, the heartiness with which he sympathized with their hard lot, the joyous bursts of laughter with which he welcomed their rough satires on his profession, and the charming modesty with which, in a mountain region, he received the directions of an experienced woodman who was to guide him through an unfrequented forest up the side of a lone hill infested with bears and rattlesnakes, and, in a sea excursion, the teachable spirit in which he submitted to the dogmatism of a storm-tested fisherman, who offered to lead him safely through dangerous channels, enclosed by frowning rocks, to some obscure and unvisited cove, won him golden opinions from the rude companions with whom he associated. The usual compliment, vouchsafed by these primitive wood-

men and fishermen to enterprising ministers of the Gospel who display coolness in danger and *verve* in all contingencies, was given to King. "He's a parson," they growled, "and yet he is n't a confounded fool." Soon, however, the entire sympathy he displayed with their work and worth, his easy withdrawal of all claims to their respect, founded on the circumstance that he happened to be a clergyman, and the admiration he cordially expressed for their heroism in braving all dangers of the land and the ocean, led them soon to reveal to him the inmost feelings of their hearts and the deepest thoughts of their minds ; and they did it in grotesque phrases which indicated that words with them were identical with things. If, for example, a drought seemed to be making the fields desolate, the literary expression of King in noting the occurrence was translated by some old farmer into such an image as this : "Wall, the spring was rainy, you know, and the ground got cold and soggy. For the last week or two, you see, God has been moving his flatiron over it, and it 'll all come right in the end." In many cases King became the father confessor of the fishermen or mountaineers with whom he mingled ; and in opening their hearts to him they forgot he was a parson, and confided in him simply as Starr King, — a good fellow, who appeared to feel his inferiority to them in all matters relating to the practical work of the world, and who was to be tolerated as a person who would learn in time the

real meaning of life. The pupil of these rough instructors was meanwhile searching them through and through, and gathering every day a lesson in the varieties of human nature, and the difficulties which the thoroughly natural man, who has organized his character by conflict with the forces of nature, and is perfectly contented with his partial victory over them, present to the Christian preacher who would introduce into squalid homes where God rarely enters, the hopes and joys of the Christian faith, — homes which he still knows to be the scene where harsh duties are rigidly performed and coarse charities freely dispensed.

The natural consequence of Mr. King's beneficent activity, as pastor, preacher, lecturer, controversialist, and man of letters, was to give him a wide celebrity, not confined to the limits of his parish or his sect, but extending far beyond both. Many of the Unitarian societies out of New England may be classed as "struggling" societies. They are in continual need either of money to support struggling and straggling ministers, or, what is of much more importance, in need of ministers with sufficient eloquence and magnetism to organize into a compact, self-supporting body the scattered "liberal" forces of the communities into which they are considered to intrude. Some of the leading Unitarian divines regarded Mr. King as a man not only capable of sustaining a society but of building up one; and probably if Dr. Bellows, who early discerned Mr. King's

organizing power, could have had his way, the pastor of Hollis Street Church would have been despatched from place to place, having himself no abiding city, as a missionary of the Unitarian faith, moving from every town where he had established a struggling society on a strong foundation, to some other town where there was a society almost at the last gasp in its desperate struggle for existence. Mr. King resisted all efforts to draw him, not only to such fields of labor, but to such large cities as Brooklyn, Cincinnati, and Chicago, where it was at different times supposed the cause of Unitarianism needed his powerful support ; but the pressure brought upon him to undertake the charge of the depressed church at San Francisco was, providentially, too strong for him to resist. He was convinced that it was his duty to accept the call. The members of his Boston church and congregation, while recognizing the force of the reasons which prompted his resignation, loved him too much to accept it. They could not consent to part with him permanently, and therefore granted him a vacation of fifteen months, with the understanding that the society would have no "settled" minister until he had finally assured them that he could never return to that pulpit which they considered his theological home. On Sunday, the 25th of March, 1860, he addressed to a crowded church his solemn and tender "Words at Parting." The editor of this volume was present on the occasion ; and in a communication to a Boston

journal endeavored to state the feelings of that large number of Mr. King's friends who were not members of his society, while occasionally listening to his discourses. They would, it was said, unanimously testify to the fact that, "rapid as had been the growth of his genius as a fervid and brilliant preacher, it has been fully matched by a growth as rapid in his attainments as a theologian; and that his rhetoric, opulent as it was in all those picturesque images and vivid phrases which seize upon the fancy, was none the less the guarded expression of a large, clear, full, and well-disciplined mind. They could say that, excellent as were his powers of acquisition, of thought, and of speech, there was still something more excellent in the genial, loving, cheerful spirit from which his powers derived their best life, drew their richest inspiration, and received their noblest impulse. They could point to a long service as a Christian minister, in which the pulpit had never been controlled by the pews, and in which the pews could never complain that any opinions, however unpalatable, had ever been tainted by acrid passions unbecoming a Christian minister to feel. They could bear their testimony that he had always been bold and independent, and at the same time been free from the wilfulness and malignity into which boldness and independence are sometimes stung by opposition. They could appeal to thousands in proof of the assertion that, though in charge of a large parish, and with a lec-

ture parish which extended from Bangor to St. Louis, he still seemed to have time for every good and noble work, to be open to every demand of misfortune, tender to every pretension of weakness, responsive to every call of sympathy, and true to every obligation of friendship ; and they will all indulge the hope that California, cordial as must be the welcome she extends to him, will still not be able to keep him long from Massachusetts." I quote these forgotten sentences with a secret satisfaction, because they remind me that I did not wait until my friend was dead before expressing my earnest recognition of his admirable talents and virtues. The grave has no ears to hear the words of eulogy spoken over the coffined remains of what in life represented everything that was good, true, honorable, and just ; yet how often is honest and hearty recognition of noble souls a recognition which might have cheered them in the hard work of living here, postponed to the day when the soul has disappeared from its mortal tenement, and the lifeless body alone receives the praise which should have been proffered to the living man !

On the day before he sailed from New York, on the 11th of April, 1860, Mr. King was specially honored by a "Unitarian Breakfast Reception," at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. There were three hundred guests seated at the tables, and the venerable poet, William Cullen Bryant, presided. The speeches were all that could be desired, as-

sureing the preacher that he carried with him to San Francisco the best wishes of the best men of the denomination. Two short sentences in the letter of the Rev. Dr. F. H. Hedge, one of the most intimate of his friends, condense the spirit which animated the whole assembly. "King," he wrote, "is with you for a parting word, and your fraternal benediction on his way. Happy soul! himself a benediction wherever he goes, benignly dispensing the graces of his life wherever he carries the wisdom of his word."

He appears to have enjoyed excellent health on his voyage. During the last two days of the passage from Panama to San Francisco the sea was very rough. On Friday, April 27, while the steamer was pitching under a heavy swell, King wrote the sermon which he intended to deliver on the approaching Sunday. He began to write at eleven in the morning, and finished the discourse at nine o'clock in the evening. The manuscript is before me as I write; and there is no evidence that the rolling of the steamer, as it ploughed through the huge Pacific waves, interfered any more with the certainty of his hand in giving distinctness to every letter of every word, than it interfered to disturb the sweet mental and moral calm of the religious mood which marks every sentence of the composition. He arrived at San Francisco in the afternoon of the next day, Saturday, April 28, 1860. No preparation had been made for a service at the Unitarian

Church ; but he insisted on preaching. A notice was accordingly inserted in a newspaper published on Sunday morning, and the building was thronged with eager and curious listeners. The sermon was by no means one that did justice to his powers ; but it was so comprehensive in spirit, and so tolerant and generous in tone, — the character and soul of the man were so genially expressed in it, — that every thoughtful hearer felt that a new spiritual force was added to the community. He fascinated his auditors from the first ; and as, Sunday after Sunday, he poured forth his persuasive, kindly, and manly eloquence on the highest themes of spiritual and practical religion, the pews were soon occupied by permanent members of the society, and a Unitarian church was rapidly organized, which in the course of a year became one of the most prominent and most efficient of the ecclesiastical organizations of the city and the State. It was not long before the project of a new edifice was started, large enough to accommodate all the disappointed applicants for pews in the old one. The lot was purchased ; the plan of a costly and beautiful edifice was approved ; and on the 3d of December, 1862, its corner-stone was laid. The pastor by this time was recognized as the foremost pulpit orator of the State. It is to be said, however, that the majority of the sermons which gave him this prominence had been written for his society in Hollis Street. Of the twenty-two discourses

printed in this volume sixteen were first preached in Boston, and most of these were twice repeated in San Francisco.

But his influence was not confined to those who sympathized with his theological opinions. As a lecturer he was welcomed everywhere and by everybody. His knowledge, wit, humor, fancy, the fervor of soul which animated his fertile and fertilizing thought, and the magnetic force of his character, gave to his lectures the rare quality of being universally attractive, — an attractiveness felt as much by the rough miner as by the most cultivated inhabitant of San Francisco or Sacramento.

The great occasion, however, which raised Mr. King to the position of the foremost citizen of California, was the outbreak of the Rebellion. As early as February, 1861, he commenced his assaults on secession by a lecture on "Washington"; this was followed in March by one on "Daniel Webster and the Constitution of the United States"; and in April by one on "Lexington and Concord." These were delivered in various parts of the State, and were received with immense enthusiasm. On the 19th of May he announced to his church what course he should pursue, both as a clergyman and as a citizen, as long as the war lasted. His topic was "The Great Uprising." The whole sermon indicates "a great uprising" of King's latent capacity for moral and Christian indignation, for righteous

wrath. After emphatically declaring that it is the duty of a Christian minister to feel no personal animosity to any human being, he distinguishes between a wrong done to himself and a wrong done to the community. He illustrates the distinction in this reference to the President of the Confederate States: "He is a representative to my soul and conscience of a force of evil. His cause is pollution and a horror. His banner is a black flag. I could pray for him as one man, a brother man, in his private, affectional, and spiritual relations to Heaven. But as President of the seceding States, head of brigand forces, organic representative of the powers of destruction within our country, — *pray* for him! — as soon as for antichrist! Never!" It would, he added, be as incongruous to pray for *him* as he prayed for Abraham Lincoln, as it would be for an English churchman, during the Sepoy rebellion, to have prayed for Queen Victoria and Nína Sahib in the same breath. The close of his sermon solemnly echoed the tone that rang through the paragraphs preceding it: "God bless the President of the United States, and all who serve with him the cause of a common country! God grant the blessing of repentance and return to allegiance to all our enemies, even the traitors in their high places! God preserve from defeat and disgrace the sacred flag of our fathers! God give us all the spirit of service and sacrifice in a righteous cause! Amen!"

To a friend in Boston he wrote : " What a year to live in ! worth all other times ever known in our history or in any other."

The soul of this Christian patriot seemed to kindle into an ever-increasing blaze with the fuel which the events of the war supplied, and it constantly broadened as it blazed. Indeed, the only question started by his admiring friends was this : How long will this unwearied inward fire continue before it begins to consume the frail body which contains it ?

There can be no doubt that King's whole nature grew larger during his California experience ; and, indeed, every " Bostonian Californian " insists that we who heard him only in New England have not the faintest idea of what King became after he had passed through the Golden Gate. In calmly reading the scores of patriotic sermons, lectures, and addresses which he wrote and delivered in California, I think I understand what is meant by this statement. His personality certainly became stronger, more confident, more energetic, and, on proper occasions, more resolute and defiant. He took his place in the new community as a self-reliant, individual power, determined to impress his thoughts and sentiments on all who listened to him ; and he was relieved from that pressure on spiritual self-assertion in the championship of noble causes, which weighs like an incubus on every latent capacity for leadership in such an organized society as that of the

old city he had left. It would have been impossible for King to develop in Boston the dominant individuality, the fearless free spirit, he exhibited in San Francisco. Any attempt of his to assume the position of a leader of public opinion in Boston would have been crushed by the mere superciliousness of the educated and fashionable classes. All that would be necessary to teach him his subordinate position would have been a few blandly ironical sneers, a little lifting of the eyebrows, a slight shrugging of the shoulders, and, in the clubs, an expression of apathetic wonder as to who was the Unitarian parson who talked in such "tall" language. But in a new city like San Francisco, in a new State like California, composed of heterogeneous elements of population all in a fluid condition, a man of mark instantly made his mark. The unorganized materials of goodness and justice flocked to such a man as King as to a centre of goodness and justice. The division line was not run between the cultured and the uneducated classes, but between well-meaning men and ill-meaning vagabonds and ruffians; and such a nature as King's, when the Rebellion broke out, became at once a potent organizing force, uniting the coarsest-mannered delver in the mines, who had a heart and a conscience, with the most polite and cultivated merchant in San Francisco and Sacramento. The old Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, defined the universe as "a Becoming." The old cities of the

United States have "Become." California, when King entered it, was in a state of flux, — was "becoming." He stamped his mind, as far as he could, on the fluent mass, and it took more or less the shape which he strove to impress upon it. As far as regards the keeping of California loyal to the Union during the Civil War, he ranks at least in the first file of its eminent citizens. His reputation was not confined to the Pacific coast, but extended over the whole country; and the name of Starr King was mentioned with admiration and respect wherever self-devoted patriotism was honored.

There is hardly space here to enumerate even the titles of the sermons and political addresses which bear testimony to his efficient zeal for the cause of constitutional American liberty. His thanksgiving sermons for Union victories are not more notable than the sermons in which he urged his parishioners to keep their hearts strong under Union defeats. The titles of a few of his discourses will indicate the character of their teaching: "The Choice between Barabbas and Jesus," "The Fall of Dagon before the Ark," "The Treason of Judas Iscariot," "The Pilgrim Colonization," "Secession in Palestine," "The New Perils of the Nation" (November, 1862), and "The Nation's New Year" (1863). As to his political addresses from the platform, they are too numerous to be recorded, but I will give the titles of a few of those which were most elaborately prepared:

"The Confederate States, Old and New (1776, 1861)," "The Two Declarations of Independence (1776, 1861)," "Rebellion Pictures from Paradise Lost," "Peace, and what we must pay for it," "The New Nation to issue from the War" (1862), and "American Nationality." In all these he struck at the vital fact of slavery as the disturbing element in our nationality, and was confident that it could not survive the success of the war. In a sermon in March, 1863, he said: "We must give up the idea that our cannon, seven times multiplied, can avail, unless a principle loads and fires them."

In all his political addresses he proved that he had penetrated into the inmost secret of the art of influencing a multitude. His method was to give a pointed, compact, rapid statement of the opinion of his opponents, and then answer it with an equally swift, condensed, and pointed rejoinder. A volume might be made up from his political sermons and orations which would be regarded as an excellent manual for new beginners who are desirous of learning the right method of producing popular effects. On one occasion, when every seat in the building where he spoke was occupied, the aisles and entry packed, and a compact mass of people on the sidewalk, a tall rough miner on the extreme edge of the crowd, who was listening in an ecstasy of delight, nudged his shorter companion and exclaimed: "I say, Jim, stand on your toes and get a sight of him! why, the boy is

taking every trick!" This was one of the occasions where he displayed his power of "replication prompt and reason strong," after giving a lucid statement of opinions adverse to his own. His felicity in "taking every trick" in the argumentative game extended to every contrivance by which wit retorts on wit and ingenious fancy on arrogant assertion. The roughest example of this that I can find, in some fifty of his speeches, occurs in his Fourth of July Oration at Stockton, in 1862, on "The New Nation to issue from the War." After denouncing the crime implied in the attempt to murder a nation, he adds: "Mr. Toombs said in Washington, at a dinner-party a little over a year ago, that he wanted it carved over his grave: 'Here lies the man who destroyed the United States Government and its Capitol.' He cannot be literally gratified. But he may come so near his wish as this, that it shall be written over his gallows, as over every one of a score of his fellow-felons: 'Here swings the man who attempted murder on the largest scale that was ever planned in history!'"

Mr. King was not content merely to proclaim and defend the general principles of loyalty to the threatened nation. He resolutely opposed every California politician whom he considered to be lukewarm, craven, or false in respect to the supreme duty of standing by the government in its years of peril; and ten days before the election of October, 1863, he preached in his church on

the "Moral Aspect of the Coming Election," stigmatizing the Rebellion as simply "the largest mob ever seen in history," and urging his listeners to vote Copperheadism relentlessly down in every place where it presented a candidate. In this close grapple with obnoxious politicians he of course made some honest and many unscrupulous enemies. As he spoke from political platforms in all parts of the State, he met occasionally with turbulent opposition. Indeed, effort after effort was made to put him down. Pistols were sometimes levelled, sometimes snapped, at him, but the ruffians soon found that he paid as little heed to revolvers as an old Garrisonian abolitionist did to unsavory missiles hurled at his head. There is no case mentioned in which the orator did not triumph over every element of brutal opposition in the assemblages he addressed. As the wondering and admiring miner said, in contrasting his small, frail body with his quick mind and penetrating, resonant voice, "the boy took every trick." The honest, hard-fisted, good-hearted roughs were delighted with his manliness; and the malignant, scampish roughs were compelled to slink away the moment they attempted to commit any outrage on his person.

Meanwhile his devotion to the task of building up his society seems hardly to have been interrupted by his public performances. He wrote a series of eight able Sunday evening lectures on the controverted points between Unitarians and

their theological opponents. For the new church of his society he contributed a thousand dollars out of his salary ; and, in addition, wrote a series of six lectures on the leading American poets, Bryant, Longfellow, Holmes, Whittier, and Lowell, in order to obtain the means (thirty-five hundred dollars) of purchasing an organ, which was his gift to the church. He was always ready to speak in aid of any of the benevolent associations of the city, and a dozen of such addresses, elaborately written out, remain among his manuscripts. In November, 1861, he wrote a letter to the standing committee of the Hollis Street Society, resigning his office as pastor of that parish, on the ground that duty to his new society would keep him at least a year longer in California. Of course his toils were telling terribly on his health. "I should be broken down," he wrote to an Eastern friend, "if I had time to think of how I feel, but I don't. . . . Leisure and rest, I fear, will not come to me this side of the grave." One of the noblest results of his labors was the influence he exerted in raising many hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Sanitary Commission, for which he lectured, not only in California and Oregon, but in Nevada and Washington. There can be no doubt that he was the most electric speaker on the Pacific coast, for he could not only open hearts but open purses, and money flowed in a golden stream wherever his appeal for charity was heard.

The new church of his society was completed

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he pours out a stream of mingled reflections and emotions from his fertile intellect and beneficent heart ; but the result is generally a sermon which is not only spiritually inspiring but artistically excellent.

Dismissing, however, the question of style, there can be little doubt as to the power and persuasiveness with which Mr. King enforces that element of Christianity which is at once its fundamental principle and its fundamental fact, namely, that the Spirit of God comes into vital communion with the souls of men. In this belief, at least, he is as evangelical as Jonathan Edwards. Throughout the sermons published in this volume it will be observed that the awful fact of this communion of the Infinite with the finite soul is held up as outvaluing all earthly blessings, and as constituting the utmost bliss that heaven can bestow. He was very familiar with all the arguments which in our day appear to demonstrate that the Infinite, whoever He is, or whatever It is, can never be known through the processes which necessarily limit human thinking ; but he steadily rejected the doctrine that the Infinite was therefore simply the Unknowable. God, infinitely distant from the human understanding, might still, in his view, be intimately near to the human soul. He knew it as a fact of personal experience. He thought it an impertinence to declare that God was necessarily unknowable because he could not be received through the logical faculty of the mind.

To his own mind, the reasonings of scientists were opposed to the notorious facts of Christian consciousness. While the limitations of human thinking, as expounded by Sir William Hamilton or Herbert Spencer, were defiantly thrown at his head in an assembly of eager disputants, he would listen with a placid, languid, jaded smile, indicating that he was spiritually bored by the discussion. I never remember an occasion on which he attempted to answer any of the arguments brought forward to show that the Infinite, if he existed, must still be utterly incapable of being perceived by a finite consciousness. But his indestructible faith was that a Personal God did, in some way, open a path for himself into the human soul, and that, through the highest spiritual affections, he found easy avenues of approach to every finite human being who was capable of saying "I am." This faith is dominant in all the sermons in the present volume ; and connected with it is the belief that God pervades every part of his creation, from the unseen minute atom which no microscope can detect, through all the visible kingdoms of nature, up to the souls of the greatest scientific and poetic interpreters of nature. To him God was everywhere and in everything ; and yet He was not the impersonal Power of the pantheist, but a God who is an infinite "I" and not an infinite "It," — a God who personally loves and cares for every soul he has created.

Connected with this faith was his conception

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ture stealing or streaming into it. Such evil spirits could not live in such a rebuking presence, whether it came in the form of wit, or tenderness, or argument, or admonition, or exhilarating appeal, or soul-animating eloquence. Everybody became more generous from contact with that radiating beneficence ; everybody caught the contagion of that cheerful spirit of humanity ; everybody felt grateful to that genial exorcist, who drove the devils of selfishness and pride from the heart, and softly ensconced himself in their vacated seats. The wonder is, not that he raised so much for benevolent purposes, but that he did not make a complete sweep of all the pockets which opened so obediently to his winning appeal. Rights of property, however jealously guarded against others, were felt to be impertinent towards him ; his presence outvalued everything in the room he gladdened with his beaming face ; people were pleasingly tormented with a desire to give him something ; for giving was so emphatically the law of his own being, he was so joyously disinterested himself, that, in his company, avarice itself saw the ridiculous incongruity of its greed, and, with a grim smile, suffered its clutch on its cherished hoards to relax.

And this thorough good-nature had nothing of the weakness, nothing of the cant, nothing of the fear of giving offence, nothing of the self-consciousness, nothing of the bending and begging air of professional benevolence, but was as erect

and resolute as it was wholesome and sweet. It seemed the effect of the native vigor as well as the native kindliness of his cordial and opulent soul. It never cloyed with its amiability. It did not insult the poor with condescension, or court the rich with servility, but took its place on an easy equality and fraternity with all, without the pretence of being the inferior or superior of any. While he was too manly to ape humility, the mere idea of setting himself up as "a superior being" would have drawn from him one of those bursts of uncontrollable merriment, happy as childhood's and as innocent, which will linger in the ears of friends who often heard that glad music, until the grave closes over them as it has over him.

The expression of this nature through the intellect was as free from obstruction as through morals and manners. His mind, like his heart, was open on all sides. Clear, bright, eager, rapid, and joyous; with observation, memory, reason, imagination, in full play; with a glance quick to detect the ludicrous as well as the beautiful; and with an analogical power, both in the region of fancy and understanding, of remarkable vivacity and brilliancy, — his intellect early fastened on facts and on principles with the delight of impulse rather than the effort of attention and will. In swiftness and exactness of perception, both of ideas and of their relations, he was a marvel from his boyhood. Grasping with such

ease, and assimilating with such readiness, the nutriment of thought, he *made mind* faster than others receive impressions. His faculties palpably grew day by day, increasing their force and enlarging their scope with every fresh and new perception of nature and books and men. He tasted continually the deep joy of constant mental activity. Who shall measure the happiness of that exhilarating sense of daily increase of knowledge and development of power? — the sweet surprise of swift-springing thoughts from never-failing fountains, — the glow and elation of soul as objects poured in from without, and ideas streamed out from within? His mind, as independent as it was receptive, and as free from self-distrust as from presumption, never lost its balance as it sensitively quivered under the various knowledge that went thronging into it; for there, at its centre, was the judgment to dispose as well as the passion to know, and the sacred hunger for new truth and beauty never degenerated into that ignoble gluttony which paralyzes the action of the intellect it overfeeds.

There is something glorious in the contemplation of a youth passed in such constant, such happy, such self-rewarding toil. He had a natural aptitude for large ideas and deep sentiments. His mind caught at laws immersed in bewildering details, — darted to the salient points and delved to the central principles of controverted questions, — and absorbed systems of philosophy as

hilariously as others devour story-books. The dauntless stripling grappled with such themes as Plato and Goethe, and wrote about them with a prematurity of scholarship, a delicacy of discernment, a sweet, innocent combination of confidence and diffidence, which were inexpressibly charming. Throughout his career, in sermon and in lecture, this strong tendency to view everything in its principles was always prominent ; and as a popularizer of ideas removed from ordinary apprehension, — secreted, indeed, from general view in the jargon of metaphysics, — he was, perhaps, without an equal in the country.

It is hardly possible to say what this mind might not have grown to be, had not the drain on its energies begun almost as early as the unfolding of its faculties, had not the dissipation of power nearly kept pace with its accumulation. His time, talent, and sympathies were the property of all they delighted and benefited. The public seized on him at an early age, and did not loosen its grasp until within a few days of his death. His parish was not confined to this society, but covered the ever-enlarging circle of his acquaintances and audiences. The demands, accordingly, on that fertile brain and bounteous heart were constant and endless. We were always after him to write, to preach, to lecture, to converse ; we plotted lovingly against his leisure ; and as long as there was a bit of life in him, we claimed it with all the indiscriminate eagerness

of exacting affection. As soon as a thought sprouted in his head, we insisted on having it ; and we were all in a friendly conspiracy to prevent his exercise of that patient, concentrated, uninterrupted thinking, which conducts to the heights of intellectual power.

Perhaps his elastic mind might have stood this drain ; but the mind is braced by the emotional forces which underlie it, and it was on these that his friends delighted to feed. His sympathetic nature attracted towards him the craving for sympathy in others ; and nothing draws more on the very sources of vitality, mental and moral, than this assumption of the sorrows, disappointments, miseries, and heart-breaks of others, this incessant giving out of the very capital and reserve fund of existence, to meet the demands for sympathy. I have sometimes seen him physically and morally fatigued and exhausted from this over-exertion of brain and heart, and have wondered why, if each found it so hard to bear his own burdens in silence, we did not consider the cruelty of casting the burdens of all, in one mountainous load, upon him.

When we remember this immense readiness to give, this admission of the claims of misfortune and trouble to take out patent-rights on his time and sympathy, it is astonishing how much, intellectually, he achieved. This was owing not more to the fine quality of his intellect than to its mode of action ; for deep down in the very centre of

his being was the element of beauty, and this unceasingly strove to mould all he thought and did into its own likeness. It was not only expressed in fancy and imagination, in the richness of his imagery and the cadence of his periods, and in that peculiar combination of softness and fire which lent to his eloquence its persuasive power, but it gave luminousness to his arrangement, method to his scholarship, consecutiveness to his argumentation, symmetry to his moral life. It abridged as well as decorated his work. Things that went into his mind huddled and confused, hastened to fall into their right relations, and harmoniously adjust themselves to some definite plan and purpose, as soon as they felt the disposing touch of that artistic intelligence to which all disorder was unbecoming as well as unsystematic. This quality of beauty, an element of his character as well as a shaping faculty of his mind, demanded symmetry in all things, — symmetry of form in things imaginative, symmetry of law in things intellectual, symmetry of life in things moral. The besetting sins of the head and the heart appeared to him uncomely as well as wrong, and he avoided them through an instinctive love of the good and the fair. As much of our intellectual and moral effort is spent in removing obstacles and overcoming temptations, and as from this weary work he was in a great measure spared, the time saved was so many years added to his life.

ter. Tell them these were my last words, and say good-by to all of them for me." He was then asked: "Are you happy?" "Yes," he answered, "happy, resigned, trustful." Then he repeated the Twenty-third Psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd," emphasizing the verse, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff shall comfort me." Breathing more and more slowly, his life gradually ebbed away without a struggle or a pang.* Four years before he had passed through the Golden Gate of San Francisco to consecrate his life, as a Christian patriot, to the service of his country and his God; he now passed through another Golden Gate, which opened to him a region laid down in the charts of no geographer, but which, in ecstatic vision, had long been visible to the eye of his soul.

The funeral of Mr. King was a touching ceremony, for it expressed the genuine grief of a great city at the departure of its greatest citizen. There is always a tendency, in the public funeral of an eminent man, to convert the occasion into a mere imposing spectacle for crowds to gaze at; but in this instance the formalities were identical with the realities of sorrow. It was universally felt that a vital force, pledged to the cause of all that was noble, generous, and good, and which could not be replaced, had been withdrawn in the full

* See Richard Frothingham's volume, "A Tribute to Thomas Starr King."

embodied in his eloquent book on the White Hills, a mountain region which will look the sadder to us now that the loving chronicler of its varying aspects of grandeur and grace, who has associated his own name with every valley and peak, will visit it no more ; but when his sermons and lectures are published, it will be seen how closely the beautiful in nature was linked in his mind with the beautiful in thought, in character, and in action. He loved his theological calling, and it was his ambition to pay the debt which every able man is said to owe his profession, namely, to contribute some work of permanent value to its literature. Had he lived, he would, I think, have written the most original, the most interpretative, and the most attractive of all books on the life, character, and epistles of the Apostle Paul. But it was ordered that his life should be chiefly spent in direct action on men through speech and personal influence ; and theology might well wait for the book, when humanity had such pressing need for the man.

I hardly know how to speak of his moral and spiritual qualities ; for, noble as they were, they were not detached from his mind, but pervaded it. Both as a thinker and as a reformer he was brave almost to audacity ; but his courage was tempered by an admirable discretion and sense of the becoming, and his quick self-recovery from a mistake or error was not one of the least of his gifts. He seemed to have no fear, not even the

subtlest form which fear assumes in our day, — the fear of being thought afraid. No supercilious taunt, or imputation of timidity, could sting him into going farther in liberal theology and reforming politics than his own intelligence and conscience carried him. Malignity was a spiritual vice of which I have sometimes doubted if he had even the mental perception. His charity and toleration were as wide as his knowledge of men. Controversy was a gymnastic in which he delighted to brace his faculties, but he could look at disputed questions from the point of view of his opponents, discriminate between dogmas and the holders of them, and assail opinions without unwittingly defaming character. "Speaking the truth in love," was a text which he seemed born to illustrate ; and if, as a theologian, he did not perceive the moral evil of the world in all its ghastliness, it was because its most hateful forms stole away when he appeared, and, addressing what was good in men, the good went gladly out to him in return. His piety, pure, deep, tender, serene, and warm, took hold of the positive principles of light and beneficence, not of the negative ones of darkness and depravity, and — himself a child of the light — he preached the religion of spiritual joy.

The rarity of such a character, and the wide influence it was calculated to exert in virtue of its native qualities, were only seen in all their beauty and might when he went from us to California

and we looked at him from afar. In four years he condensed the work of forty. The very genius of organization seemed to wait upon his steps. Men flocked to him as to a natural benefactor. As a clergyman, he built up the strongest church in the State, with an income the largest of any in the land. As a philanthropist, he raised for the most beneficent of all charities* the most munificent of all subscriptions. As a patriotic Christian statesman, he included the real elements of power in the community, took the people out of the hands of disloyal politicians, lifted them up to the level of his own ardent soul, and not only saved the State to the Union, but imprinted his own generous and magnanimous spirit on its forming life. In the full speed of this victorious career, with the blessings of a nation raining upon him, he was arrested by death,—the rich and abounding life suddenly summoned to the Source of Life, and “happy to go.” Human willingness could hardly answer the Divine Will with more perfect submission; and it is not for us, who remember with what a shock of inexpressible grief and pain that unexpected departure smote the hearts of kindred and friends, but who also remember how often from this pulpit, and from his lips, we have been taught that the purpose of Providence in sending death is always beneficent, to doubt that the stroke, so heavy to us, so “happy” to him, was prompted by wisdom and love. Bowing be-

* The Sanitary Commission.

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fore that transcendent mystery, and not seeking to penetrate it, let us find consolation in the faith that this child of the light has been caught up into the Light Ineffable, that this preacher of the religion of spiritual joy has entered into the Joy of his Lord !

EDWIN P. WHIPPLE.

I.

THE EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

"The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes." — *John ix. 30.*

WHAT a singular and interesting dispute concerning the claims of Christ was that from which the passage just read has been selected! The parties concerned in it make it as remarkable as the suggestions which their discussion furnishes to our mind. On one side were learned and subtle men, who had made theology the study of their life, and who had arguments in favor of their system at their fingers' end. On the other side was a poor, despised, unlettered man, who could not appreciate the intricacies of systematic theology, and probably could not understand the terms in which its principles were couched. The Pharisees denied vehemently the claims of Christ, and attempted to vilify his character. The poor man strenuously and confidently defended both. But their discussion produced little effect upon each other, for they argued from different premises. The Pharisees judged Christ

by a theory. Because he did not fulfil their notions of what the Jewish Messiah should be, because his career did not square with their interpretations of the prophecies and the traditions, because he held a different view from their own of the Sabbath and of the nature of religion, they rejected his claims with considerable scorn. These objections, however, did not touch the source of their opponent's convictions. He had experienced a most blessed and an enduring benefit from the divine power of Jesus. From his birth he had been blind. The world of forms and colors, the brilliancy of the dawn and the pomp of the sunset and the dim grandeur of the starlit sky, the majesty of the hills, and the "pensive quietness" of the meadows, and the faces of his kindred and friends, — all the varieties and glories of God's art had been to him as though they were not. He had grown to manhood in a rayless world. Christ had touched his eyes, and he saw. A new world was instantly open to him. He beheld a universe of which before he had no conception, and he felt that from that hour existence would bring to him infinitely greater joy. Is it any wonder, then, that the speculative objections of the Pharisees were powerless upon his soul? He owed a new being to the influence of Jesus; every beautiful reality of nature which his unsealed eyes beheld attested the power of Christ, and he could only reply to the subtle insinuations of his questioners, "Whether he be a sinner or no I know

not : one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

Here we see a practical conviction of the claims of Christ set against speculative doubts of those claims ; and so this dispute between the restored blind man and the Pharisees is a symbol of what often happens in the world. It would be easy to find men now who have doubts concerning Christianity born of intellectual inquiry, which they find it impossible to appease ; while there is another class of persons who feel a confidence in Christianity born of inward experience, which it would be impossible to overthrow. And if two persons representing these two classes should meet and attempt a discussion, they could not understand each other, for their souls would not touch. The believing man could not confute nor dispel the doubts that would be reported to him by his opponent, because he had never felt those doubts, and could not judge of their validity. The sceptical man could receive no immediate aid from the practical conviction of the believer, for that conviction could not be translated from feeling into effective statement in words. One is troubled with doubts about the miracles ; the other can tell only of the sweet peace of Christian duty, and a sense of pardoned sin. One cannot see that the links are complete in the historical chain of evidence for the authenticity of the four Gospels ; the other can only answer that the words of those Gospels have nourished his soul, and made life a more no-

ble experience and bereavement less painful and the tomb less dark. One cannot be entirely sure that such a person as Christ ever lived ; the other feels that it is his highest privilege to follow the spirit of the recorded Christ and to be a disciple of his published temper. One may anxiously be waiting for the last book by some great German theological scholar, to settle or confirm his wavering mind upon some point of the evidence ; the other strengthens his faith by the daily responses that are vouchsafed to Christian prayers. One questions from a darkened intellect ; the other answers from a sunlit soul. One cannot but say, from the force of the doubts which his philosophy has started, "As for this man Jesus, I know not from whence he is" ; the other replies, "Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that you know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes."

It is implied in what we have now said that there are two lines of evidences for Christ and his religion, that are almost entirely independent of each other, one of which is addressed to the understanding, and the other to the soul. These two lines ought to blend together, and will come to a focus in a perfectly constituted faith ; but they will blend as separate rays from different quarters of the world of truth. And there are these two lines of evidence for the truth of Christ's religion because Christianity presents two aspects, —one historical, and the other spiritual,—

a side of narrative which is, as it were, its envelope, and of truths which constitute its essence. There are the annals which it proposes for our credence through the pages of the four Evangelists, such as that Jesus was born of certain parents, lived at a certain epoch, wrought miracles, was crucified, rose from the tomb, and ascended into heaven. This is the historical framework of Christianity, and the way to determine the validity of it is by the thorough scrutiny of the understanding of the historical proofs for the authenticity and veracity of the records. A person who has examined those proofs, and finds them sufficient to convince his mind,—as they have convinced the greatest minds,—is a believer in the facts of Christian history. And then there are the great spiritual principles of the Gospel,—its laws of moral life, its revelations concerning God and duty and destiny, the means it offers for the redemption and education of the soul,—a person who has in some measure felt the power of those principles, and experienced the peace and joy, the thrilling sense of spiritual health, which are induced by living in harmony with the requirements of Christianity, is a believer in the essence or vital truths of the Gospel. And no other evidence can be substituted for this inward, experimental proof, for no other evidence but that is natural or possible in relation to that branch. Historical evidence is requisite to settle historical questions, and spiritual evidence is necessary to settle spiritual questions. We believe

in the biographies of Jesus because the testimony of the first and second centuries is strongly in favor of their veracity; but we cannot know whether the religion of Jesus is competent to satisfy and educate the soul until we see what it actually does for men, and feel its power in our own breasts.

The question is earnestly debated now which of these two lines of evidence for Christianity is the more powerful and satisfactory. The proper answer, of course, should be that both are essential, for each line supports a peculiar department of the Gospel. If we believe that it will always be, as it surely must be, of importance to the world to know that Christ lived, and that the miracles were wrought, and that he was crucified and rose, then the historical proofs of the Evangelists' account will always be needed; and if faith in the history of Christ shall ever die out from the heart of society, I believe that his religion would lose its hold upon the world. But as an evidence of the essential truth of the religion of the New Testament, the practical evidence must always be the stronger. Its force increases with every century; the success of every new missionary in a heathen land adds to it; the experience of each converted man makes it more intense; and with the mass of Christians it is now the great pillar of faith in the Gospel. And the progress of time will make it still more emphatically the bulwark of Christianity. Not that men will ever grow indifferent to the histor-

ical facts of the Gospel,—that Jesus lived and was the divinely commissioned Teacher,—but that they will reason to the fact of his actual existence and divinity from the practical evidence which the soul furnishes for his religion. The argument against scepticism with the great body of believers will be the argument of the unlettered Jew, “Why, herein is a marvellous thing.” Critics may say it is illogical to reason so, still that is the way men do reason and will reason. Men are very apt to reason, often to some purpose too, in ways not recognized in books of logic. And perhaps, if we look closely enough, we shall see a beautiful proof of the Divine forethought for the Gospel, that, as we float away from the early ages, and the light of their testimony grows fainter in the distance, new proofs shall arise and command attention, from the influence of Christianity age after age upon society and the soul,—proofs that not only hold the faith of men to its essential principle, but also sustain their confidence in its historic facts.

But to return to the topic which is the especial theme of this discourse. The ordinary scepticism of men, we repeat, does not affect the core of the religion of Jesus. It merely plays around the history of it, and although even there it is weak, yet it is worth while to remember that it does not pretend to do anything more than to throw doubts around the record of some facts ; it does not pretend to invalidate the essential truth of Christ's

instructions. Only that kind of scepticism which denies that man has a religious nature and is a religious being can affect the groundwork of the Gospel, and such a scepticism is a disease that can hardly be cured by proof. A truly Christian man, although he may never have looked into a volume of the evidence for the genuineness of the Christian records, feels a testimony for the Christian religion in his own heart which raises him above scepticism about the record. Jesus referred to this proof when he said, "If ye do his will ye shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." Perhaps such a man had long been wholly selfish and worldly. But by being brought within the circle of Christian influences his best faculties have been awakened and developed. And now he sees life in a different light. The wisdom and goodness of God are suggested to him from every side of nature ; it is a delight to cherish a sense of reliance upon the Deity and to feel at all times that God is the Father ; the darkness of selfishness is exchanged for the deep satisfaction of devotion to duty, the slavery of passion for the peace of purity, the misery of fear for the joy of love, the fever thirst after worldly goods for the serene bliss of faith, and holy longings for the favor of God and the perfectness of Christ ; existence is recognized as a spiritual privilege, death regarded as the door to immortality, and the universe becomes a temple for the worship of the Almighty.

Find a heart in which this conversion of principles, feelings, and aims has been experienced, and you find a heart that feels an immovable conviction of the truth of Christianity. Its peace, its joys, its consciousness of spiritual health, its insight into a new world of which before it had no conception, all bear testimony to the reality of Christ's religion. What if some man tells him that the historical proof is not entirely perfect and convincing. The principles of Christianity are his sustenance; he has found the Gospel to be spiritual bread; he can no longer live without it; and, knowing that it nourishes his soul, and is indispensable to his peace, he does not care to dispute about the way in which that bread was prepared, and the method of its first introduction to the world. He is sure that the soul needs it, and, being sure of that, he cannot believe that it came into the world by accident or by deception. And therefore his last answer to scepticism about Jesus is the answer of the text, "Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes."

The great question which should determine the essential truth of any religion is the practical one, — What can it do for man? Does it provide for his weakness? does it meet his needs? does it educate and satisfy his spiritual nature? If it does all these perfectly, it must have been made for man, and it must be true, unless God is a deceiver, and the soul itself an organized cheat.

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ception of a stern necessity or senseless chance? Let no Christian be disturbed by the fear that the Gospel will perish until he has concluded that good is ephemeral and doomed to die. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Find anything better than the religion of Christ, a system better adapted to human wants, a system which contains truths and laws to which the spiritual instincts of the purest minds are more readily attracted, — in a word, a system that can educate character to a higher type than that of the Gospel, — and though it come from a wild negro tribe in Africa, though it be found scratched on bark among the savages of Patagonia, we ought to take it, take it as a divine revelation, and let Christianity pass into the background as a religion of the past. If the Mormons can point to it, I will gladly be a Mormon ; if the Turk can show it, I will be a Mohammedan ; if the Brahmins can produce it, I will exchange the New Testament for the Vedas. No historical evidence can stand before the disproof of a higher spiritual thought. The discovery of such a system would demonstrate the fact that Christ, like Moses, is not the religious teacher for eternity. Any man is justified in abandoning Christianity when he has found something purer and higher, and not till then. The Church has the right to hold every sceptic to this problem : Produce your truth, your morality, your type of character that shall be seen to be higher than Christianity, that

we too may have it, or accept Christianity because of your inability to conceive the possibility of doing it.

Let this proof of the Gospel be deeply impressed upon our minds : in the world that God governs what is highest must be truest ; what will open the eyes more powerfully than any other influence, what will quicken the conscience more thoroughly than anything else, what will best cheer the heart, what will most inspire the affections, what will fill the soul with holy light, cannot but be as true and permanent as the eternal throne.

And so every benefit which the Gospel has conferred upon society, every element of life it has infused into civilization, every great disinterested character it has produced, every noble institution it has projected, is an evidence of its reality and strength.

In exchange for sages like Socrates it has given to humanity sages like St. Bernard ; for teachers like Pythagoras, teachers like Oberlin ; for heroes like Alexander, heroes like Howard ; for the victories of Cæsar, the victories of Father Mathew ; for speculators like Plato, missionaries like Paul. All that is purest and most refined in our art and our eloquence, all that is most cheering and elevating in our literature, all that is most stable and comforting in our philosophy, all that is most praiseworthy and beneficial in our society, — the church, the school, the ministry for the poor, the missionary post, the abolition movement, the tem-

perance pledge, the asylum, the hospital, the charitable sewing-circle, the hundred-handed methods of modern beneficence, — are blessings we have derived from Christianity in exchange for evils that once existed in their stead. Humanity, once poor, blind, and scorned, has slowly for centuries been raising itself from the dust, quickened by the words of Christ, and now, as light is breaking upon its brain, as new hopes and a new existence begin to gleam before it, we hear it uttering its sweet and earnest plea against scepticism, "Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not whence this Jesus is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes."

The historical evidence for the Gospel is strong, but it is hid in dusty books and ancient parchments, and besides it is not applicable to the whole of Christianity. How much more cheering and inspiring is the proof that is based on the essential divinity of perfect goodness, on the regenerating influence that has been poured into the heart of society from the recorded life and character of Jesus, or the fact that the most cultivated soul bows most reverently to his reported precepts, and can catch no glimpse of spiritual truth that is higher than his words! Can it be that such a record is fiction? that what has been the source of all our great and substantial blessings is itself unreal, a forgery or a dream? My friends, even if we could be convinced that it is so; if the four biographies of the Saviour should ever be shown

to be four variations of a delightful fable ; if it should be proved that the Christ we seem to see in the misty distance of centuries, walking among the poor, shedding new life even from his garment's hem into paralytic souls, speaking of the Father's mercy, and fanning the spark of love in human hearts, is an optical illusion ; if the story of the crucifixion — of the thorn-crown worn so patiently, of the dying eyes upturned in trust, and the lips parted by a forgiving prayer — be no more real than a vision before some ancient poet's eye ; — still in the name of goodness and of conscience let us cling to it as the best thing and therefore the truest which the universe contains, as the ideal of human duty, as a myth which must have its counterpart of reality in some portion of God's realm. If we reject it, and say that it is false and useless, let us abandon religion with it, and give up our belief in God. For there can be no Atheism more chilling than that which permits a man to say that the good is not the true.

The splendid and convincing proof of the gospel is the practical proof, — our need of it and its adaptedness to our deepest need, — the testimony that comes from the great natures of all sects and nations and times, whose hearts it has mellowed and whose minds it has blessed, — the testimony of martyrs who have died for it as their most precious treasure, the testimony from the breasts where it has kindled the flame of prayer, from the affections it has supported in times of sorrow, from

the graves which faith has covered with roses and symbolical evergreen. No soul that has ever been uplifted by its spirit has doubted of its truth. What, then, is the extent of our belief in Christianity? This question is equivalent to the inquiry, How deeply are our hearts influenced by the spirit of the Gospel? If we have its life within us we shall feel conscious of its truth, and just in proportion to our inspiration of its life will be the depth of our faith. Faith in Christ, — how much meaning is hidden in that phrase! It implies a heart baptized in the spirit of the Gospel, a will faithful to its laws, a soul filled with the peace of fellowship with the Redeemer. Every disinterested act we do from the impulse of its law, every prayer we offer to the Father it reveals, every pure emotion we cherish from love of its great Teacher, will strengthen our conviction of its reality and worth. Without the spirit of it within, the greatest among us are blind. Happy is each one of us who can offer this proof of Christ's divinity, — "He hath opened mine eyes."

II.

CRIES FROM THE DEPTHS.

"Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord." — *Psalm cxxx. 1.*

"Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I." — *Psalm lxi. 1, 2.*

THE wonderful psalm, of which the text is the keynote, utters the great yearning of human nature, and attests its need of an infinite helper and an infinite joy. The religious sentiment in our bosoms manifests itself, in its power, either as a deep and piercing cry, or as a jubilant experience of satisfaction, peace, and bliss. When there is a profound sense of God in the soul and a consciousness of filial harmony with him, the whole being has a sense of rest and of serene joy, which can be expressed only in those rich words of Scripture, — "the peace that passeth understanding." And any one who has felt this experience needs no other assurance, for there can be none higher, of the reality of religious truth.

But every heart that has any strong wrestle with life, and that does not know these profound sat-

isfactions of faith, is conscious, through its longings, of the reality of religion. Superficial things answer to and appease the superficial sensibilities ; but when the deeps of the nature are stirred, the cry of the soul is religious, it turns toward God and craves his light and benediction.

Whenever any of the deeper emotions are aroused, there is a demand for God, a reaching out towards the Infinite ; and no satisfaction is felt until he is found, and our nature reposes upon him. This is true of the intellect. In our ordinary states of feeling we content ourselves with the formula that there must be a divine Creator of this world, and that atheism is impossible. Perhaps we think that the whole problem of nature, as related to the reason of man, is satisfied by this cool confession that the world, so full of witnesses of design, must have had a designer. But when the human intellect once thoroughly appreciates the problem of this universe, once feels its vastness, once gets a focal impression of the splendor of it in the converging light gleaming from suns and galaxies, and deep beyond deep of systems, and nebulous firmaments spotting the far recesses of immensity with their awful haze, — when once it realizes the mystery of all this magnificence that illumines the boundless breadth and height of space, — yes, when once it comprehends the order of it, so intricate and silent and steady, the sweep of myriads of planets around countless suns that whirl and blaze and fly, each with its vast family of

orbs, in obedience to some central force, while they seem to us fixed continually in the arching cope of azure, — is there not a cry of the mind for the revelation and presence of a being who embodies all this stupendous pageantry of matter, for the assurance of a love and wisdom which is the substance of all this scenic glory, and with which the mind that studies it is more nearly kindred than all the marshalled pomp of constellations?

As soon as the human intellect appreciates the universe in which it stands, what inexpressible need it feels of something more than a mathematical assent to the proposition that nature must once have had a Creator! how it needs the consciousness of a present pervading Spirit looking out upon it through this framework of matter, and warming the whole scene with the expression of providence, — with benignity! Nothing can be so awful as the state of a great mind standing face to face with modern astronomy, and not feeling the assurance of an infinite God, whose spirit is nearer to its reason than the marvels of space are to its imagination. For such a mind is enslaved to matter. It must feel itself crushed into insignificance by the vastness and weight of the physical glory it contemplates.

If we have not felt the cry of the mind for God, it is because its deeps have never been stirred by the tremendous problem of nature; it is because we have been content to look at the outside of things, and to live by superficial opinions and hab-

its of thought. If we could for one hour comprehend what a world we stand in, what skies overarch us, what mysteries belt us, what an order enfolds us, what majestic laws secure and confine our freedom and our power, we could not exist another day, until we had ennobled and calmed the mind by a reliance on the Infinite Wisdom, and our psalm would be, "Out of the depths of this world mystery have I cried unto thee, O Lord."

The intellect, as related to the human world, utters virtually the same cry towards God when it once sounds the questions of moral order. If a man can look at the outward world, and gaze into its sheer depths of mystery, and up through the starry strata of its splendors, without feeling impelled by a central necessity of thought to rest on the knowledge of an Infinite Prescience and Providence, how, at any rate, will it be possible for him to study the records of the human race, or to conceive the great burdens and hopes and needs and woes of the general human heart at this hour, without a hunger and thirst of soul for a revelation to it of a divine plan which the partial discords in the centuries will not paralyze, of a justice that works from the centre of the moral universe, of a pity whose sweet light is never withdrawn from this bitter sea of tears? Keeping out of view our need of God, as the fountain of personal grace and source of spiritual life for the private heart, how is it possible for a human mind to live away from him, in darkness as to him,

when it sees so much oppression, such insolent wrong, such haughty brutality, such proud and sullen selfishness, intrenched in the moral world, and opposing its passion and its power to the march of goodness and the voice of truth? If any one of us here could survey for an hour the real state of things on this earth now, — could see the plans which consecrated men have drawn for the broad welfare of the race, and how they are baffled; could see the injustice and vice and cruelty that heave their billows against the best intents of patriots and Christians, and could have one intense conception of the misery which innocent souls are enduring, through the dominion of evil, he would startle the heavens with the prayer of agony, "Where art thou, O God, in whose hands the thunders sleep, and whose justice should be the basis of this world?" There would be no peace for us till we had some vision of the Infinite, and felt that he sees all this, and understands its purpose, and wields a law that will pierce to the marrow of all guilt, and reserves a love that will bless all these down-trodden ones with infinite joy.

Only let the soul believe that the heavens are not passionless, that God has a plan for humanity, of which the few centuries of history thus far show only the half-chaotic heavings, and it can work in peace and study in peace. It has the great support, then, of a faith that there is a Being who sees deeper, wider, farther, than the wisest

mortal eye, and that there is a heart filled with an ocean of goodness that will yet immerse humanity. O, the glory of our Christian faith, which provides, by just such a revelation as this, for the mind's importunate cry, that fills the whole heavens and all eternity with light when the earth seems so gloomy, and that says to us, "Take courage, be reverent, and hide a sweet hope for man in your heart ; for your sense of justice is only the feeblest ray of the Infinite equity ; and your love, that is so distressed by these sorrows of the race, is given to you only that you may lose yourself in a feeling of an unspeakable mercy ; and the feeble triumphs which right and goodness have attained thus far in history are only the forecast rays of a glory yet to break over all mankind." O that we might go down into the deeps and wrestle with this great mystery of human life, and the needs of humanity, in order that our moral deadness might be broken, in order that through the cry which would be forced from us for God, we might have the glory of his presence break upon us, and feel the manly, abounding joy of a belief that evil is not the strongest force in nature, that he cares for us, that he works for us, that we are nothing, and that we live in him.

Yet it is more important for us to follow the more personal leadings of the subject. When we feel that we are in the deeps of sin, when we are conscious of its burdens and its spiritual misery, what is the experience of the soul? Is it not a

cry, a cry for help, — a cry, sometimes, almost of despair, a cry towards the Infinite?

The great fact of this universe is the Personality of God. We understand its beauties and harmonies only when we regard them, and delight in them, as the outgush of a conscious and infinite Person, — not a set of laws, but a supreme and pervading intelligence. We are safe against scepticism, from the moral perplexities of the world, when we regard it as ruled by a wisdom and a care that flow from a conscious and ineffable equity. And so, brethren, the great spiritual call and privilege of our life is to be in harmony with this holy personality, whose highest attribute is infinite love. Who can utter or fathom the evil of sinfulness when we see what its curse is, — nothing less than a falling away from unity or fellowship with God; not the breaking of a law alone, but unspeakable distance from the presence and strength of the Lawgiver; not a misuse of goodness merely, but a turning away from the light and benediction of him who is better than his goodness, whose presence, whose face, whose approval, are worth more than all he can give us beside?

This is the misery and awfulness of a state of sin, that it sinks the soul into the depths, so that while it has relations with persons on this earth, it loses almost the sense of kindred with the holiest person, and all feeling of dependence upon him and of consecration to him. Whether we know it or not, this is the terrible judgment upon

chronic evil, deep-rooted irreligiousness of heart. We often think that the unrest, the pain, the indefinable conscious misery, of sin is the saddest doom it brings. But no ; these are signs of lurking health. Contentment away from God, satisfaction in the darkness of the abyss where no light from his countenance penetrates, the rupture of the ties between our soul and the Infinite soul,—this is the dreadfulness of a sin-loving heart.

When a man defrauds you in weight, he sins against you, not against the scales, which are only the instrument of determining true and false weight. When men sin it is against God, and not against his law, which is but the indicator of right and wrong. You care little for sins against God's law. It has no blood in its veins, no sensibility. Now, every sin that you commit is personal to God, and not merely an infraction of his law. It is casting javelins and arrows of base desire into his loving bosom. I think no truth can be discovered which would be so powerful upon the moral sense of men as that which should disclose to them that sinning is always a personal offence against a personal God. Law without is only an echo of God's heart-beat within. Conscious wretchedness is the soul's dim perception of its loneliness and darkness, the first tones, perhaps, of the great cry that will break from it when it comes to a clear vision of the depths in which it is sinking.

Can we not, almost all of us, respond by our con-

sciousness to this statement, that irreligious habits and evil passions start, in some moment of sudden and clear vision, the cry for Infinite help? Do not seasons visit us, when we see that, in spite of our earthly fortune and gilded circumstances, we are spiritually sunk in an abyss, that there is light above us, far off above us, — a sweet bright sky, a warm serene air, — and that, if our hearts were only right with God, if we could stretch out and take his hand and feel in friendship with him, we should be lifted into that spiritual day?

We often hear of a difference between an evangelical religion and one that cannot claim that title, — of evangelical preaching as something different from moral appeal and the interpretation of moral truth. Brethren, there is an evangelical preaching related directly and principally to our sense of sin and our slavery to it. And I beg you to see that the distinction of it is, not that it denounces doom against the offender, but that it comes to him with the accents of pity and the tone of cheer. The true evangel, the glorious gospel to us, is, that we have only to cry from our depths, earnestly and penitently, to God, and his grace will visit us; we shall get lifted up into sunshine. It is not his justice that prevents his mercy from reaching us; it is our contentment in darkness, our love of what is bad, or our nerveless timidity to believe in his grace and his eagerness to stretch towards us the everlasting arm. It is not his vindictiveness that threatens

us with hell ; it is our earthliness that sinks us there, — into the deeps where we do not know him, or care to worship or love him ; and if we are contented there, that is our lowest hell. God's positive relations towards us are those of compassion, — an infinite desire to redeem us and lift us up. It was the glory of the mission of Christ to tell us this, — to show us that, when we feel bound hand and foot in evil habits, we need not remain crushed in the folds of omnipotent law, but that a cry will bring God to us ; that by the tears of repentance and the opening of the heart the breath of grace will lighten our burden, so that we can stand at once humble, joyful, and forgiven in the presence of the Father. Is it not a Gospel, is it not glad tidings, that tells us this, — a Gospel bursting with unspeakable hallelujahs ? How many of us know anything of it by experience ? There is no doubt that most of us are "in the depths." Few of us remain so contented in the bondage of the world that we do not feel the wrestle within the soul, that we do not feel the inmost misery of our unreconciliation. But do we cry towards the Highest One then ? Do we ask for help, for light, for pardon ? That is the crisis-season of the spirit ; that is what all our experience is provided for ; that is why the burden is rolled upon us so heavily, — the whole burden of this universe, — that we shall make simply that ejaculation, that we shall send up into the heavens that prayer, which the whole chorus of

praises in the sky could not keep from the Infinite ear, — "O God, help me in the depths!" Then is the new birth in the soul; then piety leaps full-formed from the groaning heart; then mists roll away from the world; the weights drop from our feet; our cry is answered; we are in sunshine, we are free! This is the meaning of that great passage of the Apostle, — O that more of us could know its truth by experience! — "Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

It seems hardly proper to turn from that which is the most trying and searching experience of the bosom, to a less solemn sphere of the subject; yet we shall be in harmony with the primary suggestions of the Psalm which has led us to these thoughts, if we speak of the soul's cry out of the deeps of sorrow and the burden of the affections. How naturally these two thoughts come together, human sorrow and God! We cannot divorce them. What a shock it gives the purest sensibilities to think of anything temporal as the offset or compensation of a severe bereavement of the heart! What blasphemy to speak of or imagine such sorrow compensated by wealth, — to think of station as an offset to it, or earthly pleasures as a solace for it, or anything which the gospel of sense or pride could hold up before the mind! The depth of sorrow is that of loneliness, and loneliness of soul disposes us to turn for that society

which alone prevents us from being isolated and imprisoned in the sense of loss.

If we sink a deep and narrow shaft into the earth, and go down to the bottom of it in the day-time, and turn our eyes upward, we see the stars. The great heights of space which the sunlight hides are revealed,—not utterly black, but emblazoned with a few of the jewels which speak of the Creative Presence and Providence in far-off inconceivable distances of the Universe. So the loneliness of the spirit banishes the visions of the earth, causes the deceptive sunlight to part its veil, and brings us into mystic correspondence with the Infinite Presence, the deeper lights of his providence. Heaven then begins to shine upon us like a star, far off, feeble in its light, perhaps, but still it is all we can see and all that we care to see. In its bereavement, sunk in shafts of sorrow, the heart naturally turns to God, and the lips spontaneously speak, even though the phrases be formal and customary, of his purposes and his power.

The depths of loneliness! If all other beings should be stricken from existence, and one of us should be left sole proprietor of this world,—alone in space, alone in the sunlight, alone beneath the stars,—if our reason did not reel in such awful solitude, could we think of anything else but the religious mystery of nature and of human life? Could we think of anything else than where those myriads have gone, that so lately

peopled the world, and of what Providence had in store for the last conscious being that stood beneath his heaven? Now by this present plan of existence through which we are all of us, at times, suddenly wrapt in the veil of affliction, and virtually so far removed from the world that its hum is drowned, and its interests drop off from us, and we stand alone by a bedside from which our dearest treasure is just flitting away, or by a new-made grave that holds a beloved and reverend form, what is Providence doing for us but practically putting us in complete solitude, so that our worldliness may be broken, so that we may utter the cry of the lonely, and not only see that we need his presence, but pray for it, and find it, and rejoice.

The power of religion is manifest when God comes to us by a cleansing grace in answer to the cry from the deep of sin; but the glory of religion is revealed in the truths and the comforts that answer the supplications which burst from the depths of grief. For it is only then that the eternal world gleams with its mystic beauty, shedding its dim, strange light upon our tears. Then the ear is open and hungry for the whispers of the Gospel,—that there is a Providence which counts our hairs, and suffers not a single child of his to drop into the abyss of night. Then the heart is prepared for the wondrous assurance that love is not limited to this world, but continues its plans of education into eternity, and maintains

there a discipline designed for good, to end in celestial bliss.

O, if all the loneliness of sorrow fulfilled its purpose, how much more glorious would life be! If the death of each of those we love forced from us an intenser cry towards the Infinite, opened to us the mystery of life which only the startled heart can worthily feel, and disclosed the far-reaching vista of the future world! What a life would this be if we had such a sense of the nearness of God and the reality of the world to come and the parental discipline of heaven as Christianity would inspire, and as the soul's agony in bereavement and wrestle with the problem of death demand! If we were all faithful to that darkness which so dwarfs the ordinary interests of this world, affliction would be the greatest blessing. In exchange for one friend on earth we should get the vision of eternity, the splendor of divine light, a hope sanctified by tears, the assurance of the Infinite Presence.

We lose immensely by our unfaithfulness to the privilege of sorrow. Cry from its depths for the Lord, and his comfort will be ready. The misery of our griefs is that we make no cry. We feel the pain of a ruptured fellowship; we sit in darkness, missing the precious presence borne away; we struggle with our anguish, but we keep our eyes to the earth. We think of God, perhaps, but we do not concentrate all the energies of grief in one intense prayer for his help and peace.

If we did, if we brought the soul into the sincerest religious posture and state, we should know, through the answer to that cry, that the beloved one was withdrawn to the depths of a love which this world could not reveal ; and if the soul of the departed was prepared by consecration, we should have such a vision of its blessed work and such a joy in the spiritual world, that this world would seem glorious only as the vestibule of that ; and if the soul had not begun here devotion to infinite truth and sanctity, we should have the sweet hope in that Providence which fits the discipline of eternity to the heart's deepest need.

Religion is a cry from the depths. The noblest natures among men have been religious ones. No soul of mighty faculties, of sensibilities strong enough to sound the depths, fine enough to feel the heights, of this world mystery and grandeur, has been an indifferent, irreligious soul. They have bowed to the royalty of religious truth, either by their joyful possession of it or by their cry for it. Only the surface of our nature can nourish an atheistic plant ; when its deeps are ploughed, the latent seed of faith begins to germinate, and the promise of a piety vigorous and sinewy as the structure of the oak lifts itself above the soil.

Religious belief is an assent to some propositions about this life and about the soul and about the Infinite. Religion itself is a cry from the heart's deeps, from the deeps of experience, upwards to a living God. It is in mercy that

God stirs those deeps of feeling, sinks us in those depths of discipline, so that our belief may become experience, so that our words of opinion may become a piercing prayer. There is none of us for whom the Father hath not thus, in some way, opened these shafts of gloom and mystery. How many of us are able to say from the experience of the intellect, the conscience, or the heart, "I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

1855.

III.

THE SUPREMACY OF JESUS.

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." — *Philippians* xi. 9, 10.

THIS is the Christmas day. Standing as a memorial of Christ's birth, as well as of his resurrection, it is a double Sabbath; and it calls upon us to consider some theme that will naturally unfold to us the supremacy of Jesus, which makes Christmas the sacred festival day in the world's calendar.

The words we have quoted from the Apostle Paul set forth the supremacy of Christ with an eloquence more ample and a rhythm more joyous than any other passage in the Bible, and so, of course, than any other passage in literature. "God hath given him a name which is above every name." Stand back in history near the stable of that humble inn in Bethlehem, and how strangely those words sound when applied to that infant whose cradle is the manger of oxen, whose first sleep is upon some common straw! It is

true, some wise men from the East, urged by an inexplicable impulse, are entering the courtyard of the inn to bear some presents to a mysterious prince whose nativity, they believed, is to fall on that hour, and whose birthplace is to be in Bethlehem. But what can their strange respect, offered in frankincense and myrrh beneath that shed, avail to lift that child of a carpenter above all earthly potentates? Is it not a mockery rather than a prophecy, this kneeling of dark-skinned astrologers and sages among Jewish peasants before this untitled babe; a scoff at his impotence rather than an augury of his greatness? In presence of the power, splendor, and prejudices of Jerusalem, what can this child do, with only a few fishermen to help him, towards lifting his name above Moses and Abraham, David and Isaiah?

And when Paul used these jubilant sentences, sixty years after that birth in Bethlehem, how must they have sounded to the Cæsar in Rome, whose name was truly above every name, within whose empire the Christians could hardly be reckoned as a handful, and into whose palace even an outline of the biography of Christ had never strayed. Yet those Oriental sages died, and we know not their names; the place where the stable stood cannot be detected now; every building of Jerusalem, even the Temple that flashed so vividly in the morning light, has been ploughed into the earth. Rome and its power, the Cæsars and their pomp, and the millions that feared them, have

passed away like a dream, while history has been helping us to interpret the great sentence of the Apostle concerning Jesus, that "God hath given him a name which is above every name," which must rise still higher, and be supreme in human veneration and love.

But it is not our business this morning to dwell so much upon the fact of Christ's supremacy, as to look into the reasons for it. Why has Providence thus exalted him so highly? It is not, we may be sure, by any arbitrary methods, but because of an essential supremacy in the nature, the spirit, and the work of Jesus. He could not be lifted to the highest place if he were not really the highest.

First, then, we say that Christ is supreme according to the true scale of honors, because his office is the highest one that has ever been intrusted to any being on the earth. The various sects differ very widely as to the details of the work for which Jesus was commissioned; but they all agree in this, that he came to do what men most needed to have done for them, as spiritual and immortal beings. God appoints different offices for his great servants in society. One he makes to be a lawgiver, another to be a poet, another a great statesman, another a discoverer of the true order of the heavens, another an organizing philanthropist, another a mechanical inventor. Outside the circle of political honors and dignities which human votes determine, there are stations and hon-

ors arranged directly by the hand of God, and those who are eminent in these ranks cannot be robbed of their true dignity, but keep it for all time. Thus a monarch who simply holds his place by power, and for his own aggrandizement and pleasure, is forgotten soon after his successor mounts the throne ; but if he relates himself in any way to the deeper nature of his subjects, by endeavoring to benefit them, by striving to organize in his realm some great principles of liberty and justice, he becomes a true monarch, his soul as well as his body rises to a throne, his people recognize his name as something higher than that of a mere physical ruler, and a majesty invests it after his material power has gone.

So it is impossible to take away the authority and splendor from those men whom God appoints to great offices. In all earthly circumstances Queen Elizabeth was immensely higher than Shakespeare, James the First more mighty than Bacon, Charles the Second immeasurably above Milton, the Roman pope incalculably more eminent than Copernicus ; but in all the former cases the greatness was rather of circumstances, and so the most of it passed away when death changed those circumstances. In the latter cases the greatness was that of providential office : these men were bearers of new truth, they stood in direct connection with the intellectual substance and the mental needs of society ; and so death dispels all the accidental circumstances which may have

shadowed them, and in history they rise as the mental kings, — emperors of genius, with names higher than monarchs, — the benefactors of the immortal mind of man. Just according to their ranks of service, the eminence of their providential office, do names mount before the world's respect and veneration.

Now, brethren, it is precisely the same law, reaching its climax of potency, that accounts for the relations between that humble birth at Bethlehem and the grand prophecy of St. Paul. The highest office which God appoints to any being on the earth is to interpret the spiritual relations of our life. He is most highly endowed who has the vision that pierces deepest into moral truth, sees more of the majesty of right, unfolds more of the spirit of love, and interprets God so that we feel his life nearer to ours and see everything in the light of his providence. When such insight, such truth, is proclaimed to us, our inmost and eternal natures are touched, and we acknowledge a power nearest akin to God's, and before which all civil majesties are of no account. This is the relation in which Christ stands to the whole race. He walked in Galilee with fishermen, but he talked to the universal soul. He sat on the hillside near Capernaum, but his sermon was preached to all future generations of men. He conversed with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, but he whispered there the truths of God's spirituality and of inward worship into the ear of the race.

He narrated a story to a Jewish lawyer, but it was the world that hearkened and treasured the picture of the good Samaritan as the ideal of duty. He partook of a simple meal with twelve humble friends; and the penitent, the bowed, the weary, the bereaved, of all nations and outstretching centuries were dimly ranged around that board. His office was the highest to scatter superstitions that hung between the heavens and human eyes, to quicken the religious sentiment of the world by his breath, to bring the races together in a common worship of the Father, and to publish such a mercy hidden in the skies, that penitence should be quickened in the hearts of men, and a filial life take the place of selfishness and sin. What now was the position of a Herod and a Nero in the world, that they deserved to live, or could live, before the rising power of a soul with such an office? What could they do but die in their sensualism, earth-born creatures, with power related only to human muscles and fear,—what could they do but have their names pushed out into darkness by the spreading power of this new Spirit, who spoke to the eternal element in humanity? There is nothing strange about this culmination of Christ in the meridian of history. He has risen to the first place because he is the first in office; and God has exalted him because, by every law of truth, he belongs in the zenith of his vast providence.

Again, the work which Jesus has done is a

work of such vast proportions that his name is naturally lifted by it to the highest place. Men revere their practical benefactors. The mind that originates and carries a new law which stands between the people and oppression, or that organizes a new institution of benevolence, or that gives an impulse to a new movement for popular rights, is the largest practical benefactor of men, and is recognized as such.

In this light how does the work of Christ appear? Putting ourselves back in his position, and looking down through history, what do we see rising up over this earth, to attest the practical power of his life? Behind him is the various pomp of heathenism,—the luxury of Babylon, the splendor of Nineveh, the grotesque greatness of Egypt,—all set in relief against the little they had done for the nobler nature and the dearest interests of man. Behind him was the rich culture of Greece, whose literature, the resource of the intellectual, breathed nothing in behalf of the struggling masses, nothing to waken immortal hopes in the ignoble poor, and whose architecture was distinguished by no asylum or charity school. Around him was the vigorous power of Rome, that knew how to organize the state, how to build the palace and the forum, the coliseum and the theatre, but not how to speak to, or legislate for, the finer wants and the eternal structure of humanity. But before him, called up at the bidding of his breath, springing up in the pathway of his

words, which he scatters off into the centuries, see what new institutions rise, — homes more sacred and refined ; churches whose spires point in every land to a common father ; hospitals in which obscure sufferers find wise and gentle care ; institutions of beneficence that enfold the blind and the lame, the impotent intellect and the smitten frame, hopeless poverty and orphaned minds, in the embrace of a charity before unorganized on the globe. Laws begin to relax their sternness, manners to catch a kindlier courtesy, science to glow with richer hues, literature to swell with nobler purposes. And see how the evils and hardships of the world begin to stand out in a new light ! How pain begins to be conquered in a spirit higher and sweeter than the Stoic taught ; how unbelief is confronted with truth that charms its doubts away ; how sick-rooms are visited with tones, sweet as they are mystic, “ Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world ” ; how graves are illuminated with the words he uttered, that seem to have floated upward and inwoven themselves in the starlight that arches over the cemeteries of Christendom, “ In my Father’s house are many mansions ” ; and how bereaved ones hear a call, as from one bearing the peace, as well as authority, of the skies, “ Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ” ! Such, in the light of history, are Christ’s relations to humanity. Everything noblest in our institutions, highest in our

public principles, most just and noble in our law, sweetest in private character, most elevating in our ideas and hopes, can be seen to radiate and diffuse itself over the best portion of the earth, from his personality. Strike him out from his few months' ministry in Palestine, and all these elements and facts which vivify society and ennoble our life disappear, as the rays of light would vanish if the sun should be quenched. There is nothing so practical as the Christian religion; nothing that has done the work in this world, so controlled the forms and changed the spirit of society, as that being whose humble mission the four biographies in the New Testament reveal. If we think the influence of Christianity has been slight in the world (judging men by its own standard, it has been slight enough), compare our condition in New England with Rome in the time of Nero, and think what humanity would have been now, if left solely to the heathen principles that were then striking their canker to the heart of the mightiest empire this globe has ever borne. All the difference between Rome then and New England now, all the difference between what humanity would have been in eighteen centuries more of such drifts towards corruption, and what it is now, and what its hopes are now, is to be credited to the work of Jesus, to his personal influence upon the world. Wherever a church is built to the Universal Father, the hand of Christ is laid in consecration upon the altar;

wherever a bloody law is expunged from the statute-book of a people, the finger of Jesus has passed in mercy across its code ; wherever sounds a rebuke of slavery, a condemnation of war, a plea for the poor, an appeal for an unselfish cause,—in whatever accents, speech, or emphasis we listen to the music of the common brotherhood, it is the onward, swelling chorus, reverberating through the arches and corridors of centuries, to accompany and sustain that perfect melody that rose eighteen hundred years ago, in Palestine, like incense from the heart of Christ.

Where then is another name that can stand so high? Must it not, of necessity, rise over all others, as the world's greatest practical benefactor,—source of its best institutions, author of its noblest liberties, purifier of its homes, quickener of its hopes, inspirer of its highest happiness, regenerator of its loves?

I have taken thus far a more outward and circumstantial method than is usual, to show the work of Jesus in the world, because too many minds fail to see how the practical character of Christianity can be proved by items and by historical methods, just as the value of the Declaration of Independence and the importance of Jefferson's life can be proved by the republican structure and vast prosperity of this country now. But there is a third point, higher than the other two, which proves the supremacy of Jesus, and to which we must give the highest place,—the spirit

he manifested. His office as a teacher was most eminent; his work as practical benefactor has been broadest; but the spirit he exhibited is the crowning glory of his mission and the final justification of his supremacy.

Humanity, brethren, is above nature. A human frame is a greater piece of mechanism, a higher expression of creative skill, than the solar system. More resources of design, more intricate harmonies are displayed in it, than the orbits and interplay of the planets disclose. And then the soul of man is infinitely above the outward world as an expression, or setting forth, of God. And so the clearest revelation of what is divine must come through humanity. It cannot be written in the sky; it cannot be uttered in mysterious oracles breaking up from the earth or dropping through the air; it cannot be borne on flying leaves written with God's finger, or drawn, as the first stern code was, upon tables of stone. The human soul is God's highest creation and noblest organ, and his clearest revelation must be through that, and through the noblest part of the human soul. Intellect is not our highest endowment. Imagination is not our crowning faculty. Every form of genius is inferior to conscience, to the heart, to faith, sympathy, and love. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and have not charity, I am nothing; I am become as

sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." If heaven is to open to us, it must be through the deep, warm, holy sentiments of humanity.

Here Christ is highest. Thus his name vaults over every name. Those qualities that make our humanity translucent with beams from the Infinite,—perfect moral truthfulness, piercing through all mists of passion to what is pure, complete conformity of conscience and will, undoubting faith in God, unfaltering heroism, prayerful reliance upon the Infinite, and love gushing full and steadily towards men from a hallowed heart,—were not these elements of the soul of Jesus?—these his real transfiguration as our spiritual eyes behold him, in splendor more divine than that which invested his form on Mount Tabor, as though his nature were woven of the pure light which is the effluence of God? What name offers itself against him in challenge of his spiritual supremacy? In meekness and in majesty, in strength and in trust, in service and in royalty, in pity and in searching severity, in love for man and in clear devotion to his highest good, in relation to all or any of the qualities that interpret the compassion, the justice, and the holiness of God, or that reveal the spiritual beauty and worth of man, what name before Jesus rises to any rivalry? What name since, that is eminent among the saints and the illustrious of the world's heroes of goodness, does not count it the highest glory to be considered his disciple? His name must be highest because the desert, and his inter-

view with Nicodemus, and his merciful healings, and his nights of prayer, and his brotherly communion with the lowly, and his quickening compassion for the outcast, and his humility at the last supper, and his lonely fidelity in Gethsemane, and his spiritual royalty before Pilate, and his patience in buffetings, and his last petition for murderers on the cross, are the points in human history where the highest qualities belonging to the Divine irradiate our nature, — hostility to evil, loyalty to goodness, pity for the fallen, and love conquering all malice and revenge. His name is the highest as the personal utterance of what is highest as qualities in the spiritual world and in the nature of God.

How poor, alas, are all such analytic methods to set forth the supremacy of Jesus in the world of humanity! It needs such utterance as great music gives in that oratorio which interprets the world's need of him, his glory, his passion, and his victory. The gross darkness that preceded him is there fitly suggested to the mind. His name — Wonderful, Counsellor, a mighty God, the Prince of Peace — is there foretold with a grandeur somewhat adequate to the mighty fulfilment of those words in history. The deep calm from which he entered the world, and the sweet melody born with him into this stormy life, — yet to subdue all raging and discord to the keynote of goodwill to men, — are typified in the symphony that prepares the ear for the angels' song. His earthly

state — “despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” — finds some sympathetic utterance in those pathetic cadences that come as from the genius of music singing with streaming tears. The heart’s need of his peace, based on the inmost fellowship with God, is told, as no unsung eloquence can tell it, in that appeal, “Come unto him, all ye that labor and he will give you rest,” which seems to float out from some pardoned Magdalen or comforted mother’s heart at the feet of Jesus, that has felt her sin or sorrow melt into mystic quiet at the touch of his finger upon the throbbing soul. The jubilant faith, “I know that my Redeemer liveth,” can have no such clothing as the song which sweeps up from a basis of sadness to a tone of triumph over the grave ; and the prophetic victory of Jesus cannot worthily break into speech except through organ and orchestra and chorus, that lift up on that billowy hallelujah the truth that “he shall reign forever and ever, King of kings and Lord of lords.” Where is the name that can link itself with that music of the Messiah if Christ be forgotten? It would be too glorious, too sublime, an anomaly in this world, if it were not the Christmas anthem, the utterance of the religious needs and glory of man, and the clothing in melody and harmony of his perfection, whom God hath exalted over all the race, “to whom every knee shall bow.”

Ah, yes! how truly does every knee bow to him in the larger and vaguer sense! His name is

highest because we worship no other finite name with inmost satisfaction. Outwardly we worship other things. We strive for money ; we pay respect to conquerors and statesmen, and men of station, and rich men, and selfish men of genius. But in our best moods, in our silent hours, when we are most truly and deeply men, we adore goodness, we enthrone self-sacrifice, we pay our heartiest homage to the spirit of love, we worship Jesus Christ.

In the retreats of every heart there is one holiest district, inclosing a chapel wherein the Crucified receives a devotion that we accord to no other name. And by this secret reverence, this personal and unspoken love, we are called upon to make that name the highest name in daily practice, to walk through our duties, to live in our homes, to feel toward God, to go out among the thick miseries of the world obedient to our inmost loyalty, proclaiming that name as highest in our temper and integrity, our piety, our gratitude, our denial of passion and selfishness, our scattered charities and radiant love. That is the way to honor the nativity, that is the way to have a constant Christmas in the soul.

Bear with me a moment longer, while I refer to the magnificent comprehensiveness of St. Paul's closing expression in the text, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." This is to be the complete proof of his supremacy ; all souls will confess it at last. How glorious seems the

hope for man, for every man, in the light of that cross from which even murderers were forgiven! That Hallelujah Chorus which a human genius conceived, is it not to be swept upward yet from a choir which excludes no creature born of God's spirit for a life of good? Are the Christmas hopes and the Christmas prophecies to be cheated of their grandest fulfilment? Is any soul to be shut out forever from the adoration of Jesus and the love of God? The old Rabbis had a poetic picture of a day yet to come in the eternal courts, when the just should praise the Almighty, so that

"Will ever high and higher be borne and swept along
Heaven's azure vaulted roofs the full concert of song:
Then will that mighty voice of jubilee be heard,
Until from end to end the spacious world is stirred."

Yes, and just as its echo ceases in heaven, their fable runs that a strange "Amen" comes faintly to the throne as from infinite depths, and Jehovah asks from whence it issues. The angels veil their faces, and reply that it is from those who knew not, while living, the heavenly law. And then God

"Will give the golden key from heaven's crystal floors,
Which opens with a touch hell's forty thousand doors,
And Michael, mighty prince, will fly with it amain,
On mercy's errand swift, and all the angelic train.
Hell's forty thousand gates will open at his word,
Its narrow chambers deep with expectation stirred.
The prisoners he will draw from dungeons where they lay,
And extricating lift from the deep and miry clay,—
Will wash and cleanse their wounds where they have plagued been,
And clothe in garments white and beautiful and clean;

And taking by the hand will lead them to the gate
Of Paradise, where they must for a moment wait ;
Till there with leave brought in, they fall upon their face,
And worship God, and praise, and magnify his grace ;
While all that had before their places round the throne
Will give new thanks for this new mercy he has shown,¹
And by new voices swelled, and higher and more strong,
Ring through the vaults of heaven the full consent of song."

Such must be the final issue, yet, on some far off morning in eternity, of that song which the angels rolled over Bethlehem as the keynote of the Gospel, — "Glory to God." Such must be the ultimate attestation of Paul's prophecy, "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every name should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth."

1853.

I V.

CHRISTIAN THOUGHT OF THE FUTURE LIFE.

"And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." — 1 *Corinthians* xv. 49.

THIS verse is a fair sample and illustration of the allusions in the New Testament to the future life. There is no argument in the great documents of our religion for an eternal existence. The early Christians considered it, not as a doctrine, but as a fact. Argument, scientific and moral proofs, were not needed by them; for to their faith — yes, with the earliest ones, to their vision — the tomb itself had spoken, the sepulchre had confessed that it was only the gateway to another life. There was an Easter in their calendar, the royal day of their ecclesiastical year. And by the three great festivals — Good Friday, when the spirit of Jesus sank into the shadow; the Resurrection Sunday, when he re-entered the world through the door of Joseph's tomb; and Ascension day, which saw him fade into the sky — the three spheres of existence were knit together as parts of one stupendous fact, districts of the great territory of life, — this

earth, and the abyss, and the upper world of light and love.

Especially do the references in the New Testament to the future life show that the world to come was as real to the earliest believers as the present world. How striking those references are, — so positive, yet so indefinite, so healthy, so free from all fanatical heat and fancy, and yet so burdened with the sublimity and mystery that belong to the idea of immortality.

We often say that the revelation of the future life is the peculiarity of Christianity. And yet how meagre are the contributions of the New Testament to our acquaintance with the world to come ! The whole spirit of those writings is that our souls are our true substance, that the mortal body is only a film, that this earth is simply the stepping-stone to a great existence under other conditions and in a spiritual sphere : but they do not gratify our curiosity ; they show us nothing of the details of that life ; they point to it as though a curtain hangs before it, beyond which the true life of the soul begins, but through which it is not permitted unto any mortal eye to pierce. "In my Father's house are many mansions ; I go to prepare a place for you." "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands,

eternal in the heavens." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." "This corruptible must put on incorruption." "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." So calm and positive are the affirmations of Jesus and the Apostles concerning the life to come. They use substantial language, and vigorous imagery of buildings and garments, of wine and society and ineffable joy, as though real life is to begin when all that we suppose real here is dropped away.

This is the point to which I would fix your attention now,—the true Christian habit of thought as to the future. How definite should it be? What conditions should it attribute to the future world? What methods of being and occupations should enter into our imaginations of it, and our anticipations of its experience? All such questions as these, you may say, belong to the region of speculation, mere speculation, and can do no possible good in being seriously treated. But I say no. Our views of the future life are thin and unpractical and impotent because we do keep off from all speculation about it. How poor, almost barren, has the Christian imagination been in its conceptions, I will not say of the details, but of the principles and the objects of that future world! The imagery of the judgment-seat of Christ, which the New Testament in one or two

instances suggests, has been expanded and verified by the rhetoric and poetry of the Church, so that it has filled up all the space into which the eye of the spirit can pierce beyond the grave, so that a solemn gloom rests over the world to come. Or when the timid fancy has ventured at all into pictures or conjectures of the occupations of that sphere, it has not strayed beyond the hints of the Apocalypse, of the songs of the hundred and forty-four thousand elders, and the harps and the golden phials full of odors, and the white robes, and the palms in their hands. The conception of heaven as an immeasurable singing-school, and its business a never-ending and monotonous chant directly in the blaze of God's holiness, has little to attract the hearty thought of strong men towards it; and I seriously believe that it is the poverty of imagination in the Church as to the conditions, the duties, and the joys of the future world, which accounts in a large measure for the little care there is about it, — for the undertone of feeling which I know exists in many breasts, that an eternal life, according to the modes of presentation in the Church, is not worth having and would be insufferably tedious.

Now as to external details, it may do no good, and therefore we may have no right to speculate — I mean as to where the spiritual world is, whether we shall have visible organizations or not, and what sized beings we shall be. But as to the essential conditions and occupations of that world,

I hold that we have a right to think about it, and that we ought to, and that very much of the practical power of the future life over us consists in the kind of speculation we entertain, the quality of the musings we indulge. If we think of it only now and then as a state where final retribution shall be executed upon souls for their good or evil in this life, it will simply affect us now and then with a spasm of fear, but our inmost reverence will not be stimulated and fed. If we conceive of it as a vast stretching kingdom of haze off beyond our horizon, where ghosts live, it will have an influence upon our lives about as great as such an expanse of mist would have upon the orbit of the solid earth. We must make it in our imagination what the spirit of Christianity would have us make it,—a world for the exercise of the great powers of our humanity, and therefore a world more real, more intense, more vital and moral, than this plane of existence. We must think of its occupations and business as appealing to and attesting the distinguishing faculties of our manhood and womanhood ; then it will be a reality, a glorious, solemn, and practical reality to us.

“As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” ; this is the foundation fact on which our conceptions of the future must be built. We know what the image of the earthy is. It is a visible and physical organization ; it is a set of instruments

for the soul,—senses, bones, nerves, muscles, and blood, which serve to bring it into communion with truth, and which also claim the care and service of the soul, to supply their needs and to increase their pleasure. We shall bear the image of the heavenly. What does this mean but that our inmost nature, that which makes us children of the Infinite, shall have an organization which shall be the very form and image of itself,—not physical, not putting it in material connection with material things, and therefore not enslaving it to physical objects, but an organization bringing it directly in contact with eternal things and the laws of the spiritual universe. To bear the image of the heavenly, is it not to have our true humanity glorified and ripened, so that we shall not be composite creatures, half earth and half soul, but wholly of the substance of that which makes us kindred with God, and thus constantly in relation with the essences of things and subject more intensely to the moral dominion of the Creator? And this heavenly nature, is it not our faculty of intelligence, our social capacities, our attraction towards duty and delight in it, our love of good, and the ability to serve it, and to revere and love God, the centre and fountain of it? And if we conceive of the future life as the sphere for the exercise and training of this heavenly nature, what momentous reality invests it, how sublime and practical the conception of it becomes!

Think, my friends, how little of what makes you a man is tasked or developed in this world, and simply because you bear the image of the earthly. Business activity absorbs a great portion of the time, and that is related to the lower physical nature. It is for the purpose of securing a living, it is not for life. It is to procure a house to shelter the body against physical forces ; it is to obtain food to keep up the partnership between the earthly frame and the heavenly nature ; it is to secure a position in society according to the conventional estimates that have grown out of wealth and leisure and blood, all of which are incidents to that image of the earthly which we bear now. It is really surprising, it is overwhelming, how much of the activity and the wasting toil on this planet, the fatigue of the muscles in physical drudgery, the constant cunning of the brain in schemes of commerce, the toil of pens upon ledgers and accounts, the wear and tear of the mind in the details of great professions, the vast proportion of that industry that whitens the sea with ships, and covers the land with houses, and fills the air with the hum of work, and covers the soil with busy husbandmen, and tires the bodies and brains of the vast majority on this planet every day, so that they are glad at night to drop into sleep as the richest boon of Providence,—how vast a proportion of all this is demanded simply by our fleshly organization, has scarcely any connection with our real

humanity, but is the tax of exertion and weariness for the gift of this image of the earthly in which we are created here.

Suppose that your business relations should be stripped away from you,— your ties to the shop, your calls to the counter, your duties at the ledger, your name and fame and responsibilities on State Street, or your position in your profession, — how much would seem to be rent away, and yet what is left of you? Why, so much is left that nothing seems to have been taken. Your intellect is left, with its relations to the whole world of truth; your taste is left, and the whole loveliness of the universe is ready to feed it; your heart is left, and all humanity with its calls for friendship and love and service are around it; your faculty of reverence, your power of worship, your spiritual sensibilities, are left, and God remains as before the Supreme Mind, the highest holiness, the unspeakable love, asking for your adoration, your service, and your gratitude.

What now if God should ordain that from this hour there should be no need of physical toil upon this globe? What if by a Divine decree our bodies should be made insensible to winds, and storms and climates, and dispossessed of hunger and thirst, so that they should grow to maturity and remain there without any dependence upon the outer world? Such a judgment would instantly turn the interests and the labor of men upon the realities connected with their internal

nature. Instead of trying to get corn and grapes, despotic cotton, and infamous tobacco out of the earth, they must try to get truth out of it ; instead of studying the sky to learn how to guide ships more safely and make more money by the swift flight of magnificent clippers over the ocean, they must study the land of God's wisdom for the sake of the brain rather than the purse. The ambition and toil to build up stately palaces for the body's home would gradually be turned into the ambition for a palace of truth where the intellect should dwell. A man would come to be accounted rich by his qualities, his knowledge, and his friends ; wisdom would be indeed more precious than rubies ; and the soul's happiness would depend on its friendship with God and the peace of faith. If we could live on this earth forever under such conditions, it would begin to be apparent very soon how subtle and strong the laws of heavenly order are. What could a mind do that had no appetite and would not seek to stimulate one ? and what would a soul be with no pure delight in the beauty of the world, no deep love of its kindred and humanity, no powers of meditation, no hearty reverence for God or desire for deeper baptism in his spirit ? Condemned to live forever with no other business to occupy it than to deal with substantial things by undying faculties, the great avenues of science for State Street and Wall Street, books of wisdom for ledgers, academies and athenæums for exchanges

and banks, truths for doubloons, grades of mental attainment for aristocracies, Humboldts and Newtons for the grandees of society, Shakespeares and Dantes for presidents and kings ; no politics possible by which a mean man could get power or a brutal soul corrupt the eloquence of Senates ; no food but kindly sentiment, no wine of delight but holy love, no escape from the domain of inward qualities, and the rank they give, into external avocations and the conventional distinctions that grow out of the supremacy of physical necessities now,— would not a soul find itself in a world more substantial, more vital, more glorious, yes, and more terrible too, than it dwells in now, amid markets and ships and stocks and stores, and with a life-lease of only some threescore years? And all this simply by annulling the needs of a bodily organization ; not by taking it away, but by cancelling its hunger and thirst and its sensibility to heat and cold.

But those words, "We shall also bear the image of the heavenly," outlining for us the prominent condition of the future life, call on us to conceive a world where truth shall be more near and more brilliant than our senses will show it here, where the whole being shall be spiritual, and instead of being half bone and stomach and liver and lungs, we shall be wholly made up of what we are mentally, and in affection, in will, in reverence, and in soul. It is this conception which makes

the future life more real than this one. What we are here— nothing of our accidents and our shams, but what we *are* — goes there, and goes among everlasting realities. Our bodies here are simply the pods which break at death and shed the loosened substance into the all-embracing world of truth and spirit. Just as we are, cut loose from our coffers and our station, released from the chrysalis of our parlors, our silks and satins, our brilliant or tattered drapery of circumstances, our plenty or poverty, we go with our mental and social and spiritual substance into the world that has no meat and drink, no occupations and dignities but such as are related to our enduring undermost humanity.

Brethren, is there any speculation about this? Is it not simply the natural conception of what that life must be, if we have no bones and sinews, if "there is no sea there," and so no traffic in coin and bills of exchange? And is it not this perfect naturalness of conception that makes the solemnity of that world, when we think of people here? Can any sensuous imagery about the judgment bear with it the terror that invests that state when we say that it is the field for the development of our eternal nature, and when we see how little people are doing here for that nature? We talk about preparation for heaven on the death-bed; but can the death-bed alone give you an interest in truth more than in money, if your life has been the other way? a desire for loveli-

ness and good more than for sensual indulgence? a rooted habit of worship and communion rather than a supreme love of the distinctions and passing good that belong to this world? With myself I know it is this which arrests me most powerfully and pains me most deeply when I think of lost time and neglected opportunities, and gaining habits not in accordance with heavenly truth,—the thought what preparation is this for the great work of life yet to come; what foundation is this, what symmetry of powers, what robustness of spiritual constitution, for the business of the soul when it sloughs off the body and steps into its own world? No man can frighten me with pictures of an outward hell, and a malignant devil, and a judgment-seat curtained with lightnings and smoke. That is poor tawdry stuff, fit only for the barbarous childhood or the dotage of piety. But any eloquence that pictures the poverty of the soul for study and worship and love, its slavery to passions when it is yet to go where passions have no sustenance, its fitness to deal only with bricks and mortar, laces and velvets, cargoes and notes, dinners and wine, when it is hurrying through these to a great sphere of life where these cannot enter, but where everything is substantial,—this, whatever it may do for others, thrills me, startles me, and makes me ask about my preparation, that is, the whole preparation of taste and manhood for the world of which the tomb is the robing-room.

'Think of carrying some of the habits and distinctions there that enter so deeply into the structure of life here. Think of carrying our aristocracies there, of asking about an angel or a saint, radiant with the joy and the love of all goodness, of what family it came, or how respectable its ancestors were upon the earth! Think of the poor exclusives from this sphere carrying their petty measures, which limit their sympathies on earth, into the world of substance, setting up their little coteries to cut Gabriel if he did not belong to their set, or exclude some spirit whose brow is freighted with truth, if he was not born quite high enough to suit their fancy! Ah, is it not this that makes the comfort to our sense of justice, while it makes in part the terror of that life, that all the men not recognized here because of some superficial infirmity or defect take their rank instantly in that state? Men of ill success from no fault of theirs, men with aptitudes for service for whom no place was opened, preachers laden with wisdom and electric with the Holy Ghost but with a poor larynx, so that their churches are half empty, while good elocutionists of lower truth are popular,—all souls unjustly rated here, go to their place in God's kingdom of substance and find their sphere of service ready. It is what there is *in* us that is heavenly, what is related to the deeps of God's wisdom which are inexhaustible, what responds to his art which is undrainable, what can come into communion with his life,—only this that will avail us there; for our

business will be to grow in knowledge, in friendships, in service, and in joy.

When a man comes to lie down in the tomb, that is what we think of at once in connection with his speedy transit into the curtained world, — not how much money and reputation has he, not how much profession of penitence did he make in his last hour, but, when his breath stops, we ask, how much mind, heart, and soul had he; how much hunger for truth, loveliness, and good to carry into the world where all our faculties are related to those realities, and where there is nothing to distract us from the knowledge and the feeling of our poverty, if we have nothing but frivolous and earthly appetites and tastes.

This, according to my thought, is the Christian way of conceiving the future, the way suggested and indorsed by the Easter festival which restored the highest being among the children of God to the earth again through a yawning tomb. It is a world of faculties where we keep every power that glorifies and shall be set to the great business of life, and which grows out of the gifts and the needs belonging to our humanity. There ought to be no haze about that state. There is no more mystery about the question where it is than there is about the question where God is; and yet, if we are not practically Atheists, we must believe in God, the creative thought and goodness, as firmly as in the visible and solid products of his thoughts. Perhaps one other sense might be endowed upon

us, that would be as potent in disclosing that world to us as the lifting of an eyelid in relation to the world of light and hues. At any rate, it must be as real to our faith, if it is worth believing in at all, as the world of infinite truth, the realm of eternal beauty, of the deeps of goodness, and our faculties, the substantial powers of our manhood, which are related to all these.

To my mind one of the sublimest records of history is the reply of old heathen Socrates to his judges, when they condemned him, at seventy years old, to die. "If death," said he, "be a removal from hence to another place, and if all the dead are there, what greater blessing can there be than this, my judges? At what price would you not estimate a conference with Orpheus and Musæus, with Hesiod and Homer? I go to meet them, and to converse with them, and to acquaint myself with all the great sages that have been the glory of the past, and that have died by the unjust sentence of their time." That is what we need, — to think of the future, not as the dungeon where the wicked are locked up forever in an arbitrary doom, and the good shut apart from the evil to enjoy forever the consciousness of being saved from perdition, but with vigorous imagination to regard it as the great sphere of life, filled with society amid whose myriads we must rank according to quality, overarched with all the glory of God's wisdom, and flooded with the effluence of his holiness and love, with continual occu-

pations for the exploring mind of Newton, for the massive understanding of Bacon, for the genius of Shakespeare, for the reverent intellect of Channing, for the saintly heart of Fénelon,—with duties for every faculty and every affection, and with joys proportioned exactly to our desire of truth, our willingness of service, and the purity of love that makes us kindred with Christ and God.

I have spoken of the great faculties of our nature as passing into the future to be educated, but I have not ranked them. Of course the highest is love, and the order of the future seems most clear and most impressive to my mind, when I think that we shall go to our places there according to our love rather than our wisdom. It will be part of our business to become acquainted with God outwardly by the intellect ; but the great law of life will be more fully manifest there than even here, that our joy shall consist in the quality of our affections, in our sympathy and our charity. Though we have the gift of prophecy and understand all mystery and all knowledge, and though we have all faith so that we could remove mountains, and have not charity, we shall be nothing. Glorious will it be, no doubt, in that world of substance to be surrounded with the splendors of God's thought, to have the privilege of free range whithersoever taste may lead through the domains of infinite art, to enjoy the possibilities of reception from the highest created intellects ; but our bliss,

the nectar of the soul, will flow from our consecration, our openness to the love of God, and our desire of service to his most needy ones.

For, brethren, let us associate also with the future the business and the glory of practical service. All degrees of spirits float into that realm of silence. Ripe and unripe, mildewed, cankered, stunted, as well as stately and strong and sound, they are garnered for the eternal state by death. Is Christ, whose life was sympathy and charity upon the earth, busy in no ministries of instruction and redemption there? Has Paul no missionary zeal and no heart of pity for the Antiochs and the Corinths that darken and pollute the eternal spaces? Has Loyola lost his ambition to bring the heathen hearts to the knowledge of Jesus? Will not the thousands of the merciful who have found it their joy here to collect the outcasts under healthier influence, to kindle the darkened mind, to clothe the shivering forms of destitution, to carry comfort to sick-beds, and cheer into desolate homes,—will not the divine brothers and sisters of charity, who are the glory of this life, find some call and some exercise for their Christlike sympathy in that world; in that world which is colonized by millions of the heathen and the unfortunate, the sin-sick, the polluted, and the ignorant, every year? O, doubt not, brethren, that the highest in Heaven are the helpers, the spirits of charity, the glorified Samaritans who penetrate into all the abysses of evil with their

aid and their hope. Doubt not that there will be ample opportunities for the exercise of our divinest faculties, and that we are prepared for its joys just as we are furnished with sympathies, educated on the earth by the blessings and the cheer they have scattered among the wastes. The healthiest words I have ever read about Heaven are these simple and cool statements of Swedenborg: "There are societies there whose employments are to take care of infants; there are other societies whose employments are to instruct and educate them as they grow up; there are others who in like manner instruct and educate boys and girls, who are of a good disposition from education in the world and come thence into heaven; there are others who teach the simple good from the Christian world and lead them in the way to heaven; there are others who in like manner teach and lead the various Gentile nations; there are others who defend novitiate spirits, which are those who have recently come from the world from infestations by evil spirits; there are some also who are present to those who are in the lower earth; and also some who are present to those who are in the hells and restrain them from tormenting each other beyond the prescribed limits; there are also some who are present to those who are raised from the dead. All and each are co-ordinated and subordinated according to Divine order, and taken together make and perfect the general use, which is the general good."

How really solemn this view of the future makes the present world seem! It is a continual appeal to the heart and to the will. If we could all look ahead but a few years, we should see ourselves lifted out of the world of circumstances and graduated in the world of substance, just as we are dependent for our dignity, our resources, and our joy upon the development and strength of our human qualities, set to the work of life perhaps to begin the very alphabet of mental and moral progress. O, what a thought it is which the Easter day flashes into our bosoms, that this is only the threshold of our life, and that our real life is to consist not in wealth and pleasure, but in truth and love. My brother, your sin, if not renounced and repented of, your evil habit forming so slowly and by subtle aggregations, is casting a long shadow far out beyond the sunset; it is pledging your rank and mortgaging your peace in the world of truth towards which you are flitting. Your good resolutions, your efforts to enlarge and cultivate your soul, your nourishment of charity, are pouring a stream of light and hope on to the future, or, rather, they are making your soul buoyant and translucent for the serene atmosphere and spiritual sunbeams of eternity. To the eyes of men you may be rated now for what you have, and the scale on which you can live,—your money at interest, your splendid home, your position in the world of shows,—but think, I pray you, how small and empty are such estimates before the fact

that soon you are to enter the halls of the great house not made with hands, and begin life on your capital of mind and heart, of reverence and charity.

What we need is to banish all haze from our conceptions of the reality of that state, so that we can think of it heartily and talk about it to each other with clear eye and open brow, as we would talk of some great university or gorgeous landscape of a foreign land. Thus only can we have any comfort when our dearest are transferred hence. What is so inspiring, what aspect of our humanity is so lofty and divine, as when a Christian mother, over the hallowed clay of a little one, can say with assured faith: "This was only the earthy image of an innocence, a wonder, and a love that have been withdrawn into the deeps of eternal life, into that world of truth and essence and peace that is near me in my prayers. Its dawning faculties, which I loved so to watch and guide, are more precious to God than to me, and he has lifted them to a state of being where a purer light and more delightful splendors than the earthly sun sheds or shines upon, surround its unfettered spirit. It is mine still through my faith in God, and my assurance of the supremacy of spirit over clay." That is the way to think of the future world,—not in weak fancy, but in a conviction that our powers of thought, feeling, and worship are our real substance here; that what we know of the universe is limited by the few

avenues open in our fleshly organization, and that truth and love and right are infinite, and will be revealed to us in far higher and more sublime ways as soon as the carnal framework of our intellect and soul is stricken from partnership with our inmost substance.

1854.

V.

TRUE SPIRITUAL COMMUNICATIONS.

"For our conversation is in heaven." — *Philippians* iii. 20.

EASTER Sunday, the second festival of immortality in Christendom, seems to me to offer a peculiarly appropriate season to consider the meaning and methods of communion with the spiritual world, or what it is to have communication from that world. There is peculiar need that the subject shall be treated now as carefully and thoroughly as possible, and in the light of principles.

It is not only true that there is a spiritual world with which we can have communication, but it is true that the great purpose of life is to bring us into communion with it.

But the first question of interest is, What is the spiritual world? How shall we define it? Have you ever formed a clear idea for yourself on this point? Have you ever raised the question with your own mind? If not, all your beliefs and feelings as to what intercourse with that world is, and the methods of attaining it, may be inadequate, superficial, and confused.

We ought to be careful not to confound the spiritual world with the next life. The spiritual world and the world of spirits are two very different things, — things just as different as the truth, essence, forces, of the Christian religion, and the visible persons that constitute this congregation. A man may have the truth of the future life demonstrated to him, he may get the assurance that there are myriads of persons who once dwelt on the globe now living in disembodied form, — yes, he may even see and talk with one of those unfleshly colonists of the unseen sphere, without receiving any truly spiritual impression and influence. Just as a Hindoo may hear that there are Christian countries, that they are inhabited by millions of people, and may receive documents and letters from some of them, or even be visited by one or two or a dozen of them from England or America, and yet receive no communication from the Christian religion, get no idea of it, and be carried no nearer to the sphere of its truth and power. And all because the persons that live in outward Christendom, with whom he is brought in contact by letter or conversation, do not have any of the life of Christianity to communicate. They are not in connection with it spiritually, and cannot transmit and diffuse it. And so, if a ghost should come to our chamber and tell us that there is a kingdom of ghosts just beyond the grave, we might be convinced in that way that men do not die when their breath ceases, we

might be incited to turn our interest to the subject of the spiritual side of life, if we had not believed in immortality before ; but of itself that knowledge that there is a world of spirits on the other side of the tomb would not be a communication from the celestial sphere.

The spiritual world is the world in which souls live, and from which they draw their nutriment, whether in the body or out of the body. It is the outflow of the life of God,—his power, his thought, his love. The spiritual world is the world of reality and substance. It is the groundwork and truth of all life and of everything we see. Every flower, every tree, every plant, every star, exists because it is a receptacle of the Divine vitality. It was organized and is sustained by his thought and his goodness, and we comprehend it, we really see it, when it is translucent with the rays of the Infinite life, and brings us into fellowship of mind or heart with God. The visible material world is the shell of which the spiritual world is the soul. It is the series of printed signs of which the spiritual world constitutes the sense. When you read the sentences which Burke or Bacon has written, you do not stop to study the letters or shape of the types that cover their pages. The substance you are after is the wisdom and eloquence which they poured from their minds, and which the types record. You get into communion with the spiritual world, to which those inky paragraphs are the

portals, as you feel your intellect penetrated, and your passions stirred, with the light and heat that streamed, in their creative mood, from their genius. And the visible universe is the vast array of types, not simply once set up, but continually created and composed by the Infinite Mind, to convey his wisdom and love.

We have the privilege, therefore, of living in the spiritual world now. We need not wait to get into the next stage of existence to begin to enter it. All the life we have here flows from that world into us. We live in it and of it here, just as the spirits that have passed out of the body do. All they have to support their souls with is the Divine life manifested to them through justice, loveliness, truth, charity, as those realities are offered to us through nature and society and the Bible. We live in the spiritual world, if our souls are awake, precisely as they do, though possibly we may be one remove farther off, by our bodily organization, from the waves of light and love that flow out from heaven.

And we ought to hold firmly to the principle that the spiritual faculty in us is the real organ of communion with the spiritual sphere. The organ through which we know and receive light is the eye. The ear enables us to hold intercourse with music, eloquence, and all uttered thought. The lungs are the channel of our reception from the atmosphere. And the soul, the power by which we become acquainted with Divine truth

and respond to the breath of the Infinite Life, is the channel or medium, and the only channel of reception from the spiritual world.

There is hardly any limit to be assigned to the intercourse we can hold with everlasting truth, which is the substance of heaven, even in this world, by the soul. When you look at a landscape in summer, if you see simply so many trees, acres, cattle, stones, you are wholly in the natural world. You see the outside shapes and colors, just as a sheep or a deer does, when the scene is painted on its eye. If you study the soil and rocks so as to learn the geological truth of the region, how it was put together through ages of elaboration, by the power of God, and prepared for human habitation, the outside facts are at once a medium of Divine truth to you. A wave of God's life, an influence from the spiritual world, rolls out of the scene into your intellect, and to that extent you come into communion with the Divine sphere by your mind. If you see the beauty of the landscape, if the charm and harmony of the colors and the grouping of grove, meadow, hill, and stream, and the blaze of the overhanging blue, flecked with clouds that shed sailing shadows to cool the grass, waken in you a joy that springs from perception of the ineffable art of God, a richer wave from the spiritual world breaks through the scene upon your nature. If, beyond these two experiences, you see in the same landscape a mystic expres-

sion of the Divine goodness,— if the beauty glows with an exhalation of love, “like a finer light in light,”— so that you look on the budding corn and the grazing life, and the peaceful ministry of a thousand forces to human happiness, as Jesus looked upon the bounteous hills that sloped from the shores of Gennesaret, and if, through all the processes which publish that goodness, you see the working of laws that tell you how God’s laws and life play in the experience of the human spirit, as Jesus plucked part of his gospel — the parable of the sower — from the various fortunes of the scattered grain, a still finer surge from the everlasting world floods you from that vision, and though you stand under the visible sun, and are in the body, and within the conditions of mortality, your soul is in communion with God ; you look upon one district of this world as an angel looks upon it ; your feet are in matter, your soul is in the spiritual sphere.

You will see, too, how this principle applies to all productions of genius. When you read a book, look at a statue, examine a painting, you are on the natural plane, if you simply see the material which the creative mind used to convey its thought and sentiment. You pass up into spiritual reception in proportion as, through the printed eloquence, the imprisoned meaning, the glowing character and imagination, you rise into sympathy with the genius of the writer or artist, and lie open with him to the inspiration that streams out of heaven into the human soul.

The soul is the organ of reception from the substantial world. Spiritual communications appeal to, and are verified by, no other faculties, any more than light can be perceived by the ear or flavors by the eye. It is impossible to obtain communion with the essential quality of the spiritual world in external ways. You can only be carried to the outside of the world of spirits in such ways. It is by something told to the interior faculties, something superior in its grade to anything we can learn by logic and by sight, something that makes us more wise in everlasting truth for which the world was made, more spiritual in feeling, that is, more pure, reverent, devout, and joyful, that we verify a message from the heavenly world.

If an angel should come to you to-night, and talk a little gossip and depart, you would gain no communication with the spiritual sphere. You would only have seen a being with garments of light endowed with wings, — an addition to the lists of entomology. If the same being tells you something of God, of the divineness of goodness, of the all-penetrating grace of heaven, of the beauty of holiness, that thrills your soul to its deeps, wakes your devout affections from paralysis, and lifts you at once to clearer views of the worth of life, and a higher plane of feeling, then you have had a spiritual communication from the celestial deeps ; you have had that, and in addition, the outside perception of an angel. The

light of the angel adds nothing spiritual to the message. It would be just as much a spiritual communication, — because your soul would be opened just as really to the divine life, — if your next-door neighbor should give you that truth, and make you feel it as deeply in a conversation, or if it should stream upon you through a book.

For the sake of insight into this world and its privileges, and into the origin of all life, we need to see that the spiritual world is the world of essence ; that it is revealed to souls ; that it is the meaning which glows through all matter ; and that out of it flows all goodness, all truth, all enduring happiness on this side of the grave.

And so we must protect ourselves from supposing that one of necessity gets further into the spiritual world by passing out of the body into the next life. There is an outside to the next life, as there is to this, and it is the inside, the core of truth, which the outside suggests, that is spiritual there as here. If a person does not go up in the grade of truth, feeling, aspiration, love, in passing the boundaries of this world, it does not go essentially farther into the spiritual world, but only into another form of life, — the next life. It has changed geography and climate only. And in that case it has nothing to tell us, spiritually, simply because of its removal to another street in the city of God. It may tell us that there is a continued thread of existence which seeming death does not snap ; but, beyond that, it can give us no

spiritual information which we cannot get here, until it gets above us morally, above the plane of the Bible, above the feeling and vision of the purest minds and souls that have lived open to God and heaven on the earth.

We need to insist on this now because so many persons suppose that by the methods of what is called "modern spiritualism," they get specially and peculiarly into communion with the spiritual world. They sit around tables, have things told to them which, possibly, had been locked up in their memory, see manifestations of force which they cannot explain, and listen to speeches made in trance, and then suppose that they are in instant communication with the spiritual world. I have very little doubt that there are forces developed and active in many of these circles which have not yet been explained, which are very interesting as problems in science, and which seem very mysterious. But I have not one particle of faith, not so much as a grain of mustard-seed, that these unexplained forces, or any fact or word that I ever saw, heard of, or read of in connection with what is called spiritualism, come from the world of spirits. And if they do, if they flow from the spirits that pretend to originate them, the most we can get at through them is that there is a continued life, that people exist after they leave their bodies. If a man is far down below the belief in that doctrine, and the rappings and tedious spellings around a table convince him of it, and

if those sounds and stammerings of trifles through the alphabet come from an honest ghost, the man is only lifted up to a perception of the fact of the future existence. If his noble faculties are not stirred by a higher wisdom of God, and duty, and charity, and the dependence of souls on God than the literature of this world can give him, he had better seek his communion with the spiritual world by aids from this side the line of death.

A great many spirits belonging to the next life may dwell more in the natural world than we do, — may see things more from the outside, see less of God, receive less of his life, know less of the principles of his rule than many of us do, and so may have nothing to tell us that is spiritual. I don't want to talk with a dolt and a bore, simply because he has no bones and blood. Certainly, if I wanted to bring an intelligent stranger on this continent into communication with the spiritual world through the spirit of Daniel Webster, I should not send him to the nebulous commonplaces and sentimental drivel that I have seen printed as given from him, through writing mediums, since his death, that do unspeakable discredit to his swarthy ghost. I should send the man to his Plymouth oration, in which he celebrated with reverent eloquence the faith of the Pilgrims, and interpreted the providence of the Infinite in history, and charged the pulpit of New England to be faithful to its trusts, on peril of losing its character, by denouncing in the name of religion the trade in

slaves. Then his colossal nature was open to the breath of heaven, and through all its pipes, reason, imagination, spiritual sensibility, charity, an organ music rolled that lifts us to-day, when we come within the sweep of it, into the vision of principles and enthusiasm for holy truth.

Indeed, when I read the literature of modern spiritualism, and feel how starved and pale it is in all really spiritual elements compared with what we may have access to here, I should feel compassion for the souls from whom it issues if I believed that it came from the shrouded world, and should be more anxious to open communication from this side with them for missionary purposes ; to send back through the medium that personates Lord Bacon some solid paragraphs that Bacon wrote in the flesh ; to fling over a page from the pen of Channing, when housed in the body ; to transmit a poem of Tennyson, an oracular burst from the genius of Carlyle, a principle from the spiritual philosophy of Swedenborg, that they may see how unspeakably superior we are in the media of intercourse with the eternal world, and what an impertinence it is to rap out to us the spelling-books of the spirit as revelations, when we have had, and have, the masters of celestial wisdom. "Shall the archangels be less majestic and sweet than the figures that have actually walked the earth ?" Do large souls dwindle into dwarfs by their transplanting into the invisible realm ? Are we to account it a great

privilege to talk, by slow signs and creaking dumb-waiters, with creatures in the cellar, the Calibans of eternity, while we live in the upper chambers of the house cheerful with sunlight?

Remember that your communion with the spiritual world is conditioned on the plane of your life. The whole question is a question of planes. When a fresh principle visits you, or takes hold of you powerfully, that makes this world seem alive with the Divine Presence, so transfused with it as to be ready to melt into spirit; that makes your soul seem substantial rather than your body, and open to God; that makes justice and love appear the solid verities in comparison with wealth and power and pleasure; that makes existence valuable for moral ends, the reception of the Infinite life and the doing of the Infinite will,—then you have a spiritual communication; you have gone up by solid steps into the world of substance and light. Not when a table shakes, but when my soul shakes under the new light and force of a spiritual truth, there is a communication from the celestial world to me. Details of how ghosts live, and how near they are to you physically, and of what electric powers they have, are not spiritual, any more than gymnastic exercises which you may take are spiritual, or news of how your next-door neighbors pass the hours of the day. All this, of itself, is simply peeping and chatter.

See how majestic the old Bible looms, in this respect, over modern methods of spiritualism! It

deals with laws and truths, not with gossip about the world to come ; and when it opens the portals of the heavens it is not that angels may tell secrets about persons and fortunes in the spiritual sphere, but that God may draw nearer to souls, breathe more of his grace, and illumine the world with his light. Think of lurid Sinai ! I love to turn to the picture of that in Exodus, after reading of furniture twistings in modern parlors. Its dingy sides were swathed with lightning ; it rocked with thunder ; to touch it was death. There was spiritual manifestation : in comparison with the paltry forces that pass for such now,—the electric rataplan of rappings that runs over the tables of a continent, —an eruption of Etna to the sputter and sulphur of a friction match ! And what was it for ? To tell those soggy-minded Jewish slaves anything about Hades, or the fate of their fathers in the realm of shades ? No ; it was the breaking of the moral law into history. It was the birth-throe of the ten commandments —basis of all purity and civil strength—into time ; the laying in of the warp of Christianity into the loom of Providence. The cannon of Eternity boomed over that hour, and their echo is in history.

Not a word is there in the whole Old Testament about the details and forms of the disembodied life. (The nearest to an exception is the intercourse of Saul with the witch of Endor, and she was an cutlaw, and he died the next

day.) But the spirit that vivifies the Old Testament stretches and thrills language to the utmost, to interpret the holiness, providence, and pervading life of God, the evil of sin, and the blessedness of obedience.

In the New Testament the reserve is still more impressive. No sentences of Jesus stoop to human curiosity about the indoor life of heaven, while he is never weary of talking of the laws of the blessed life, and the Kingdom of Heaven that is within. Moses and Elias converse with him in the Transfiguration, — but who is the wiser for that dialogue? After the resurrection, is there a recorded word about the scenery, the solemnities, the offices, of the enduring life? Be busy in duty, preach the Gospel everywhere, is the instruction of the risen Christ. Paul says that he was once caught up to heaven in a trance. You will read his statement of it in the twelfth chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthians. He says that it occurred fourteen years before he wrote that letter, which must have been just after his conversion, that whether he was in the body or out of the body he could not tell, but that he “heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” Never in his addresses or his letters did he attempt reports of that season, claim credit for being a trance medium, or even allude to it. It was because he had a real communication with the ineffable light. It made him dumb but luminous. He showed his nearness to the

spiritual world, and has left the witness of it to us, in the quickening sense of its reality that streams from his pages ; in the eloquence, choking of its own fulness, that utters his vision of the love of God, the excellence of Jesus, and the joys of a heart at peace with heaven ; in his appeals for brotherly union, his denunciation of sin from a vision of its foulness and terror, his description of the worth of charity mounting into a hymn. Even the book which we have named "Revelations" is not an unveiling of heaven, but a picture in symbols of the judgments about to come on the earth, and the splendor of the loyal and blessed kingdom that is to be built up here.

The New Testament impresses us with the conviction that inward spiritual states, not outward tidings, are the essential methods of communion with heaven. A wise man of our day has written : "A man should not tell me that he has walked among the angels ; his proof is, that his eloquence makes me one." The conversations of Jesus, the letters of Paul, bear this mark of birth from the deeps of heaven, that they wrench our inmost selfishness, and command us from the heights of spiritual vision, and make the world seem thin before the inner blaze of celestial law and love.

The fatal mark of impotence and folly on all systems of communications claiming to be especially spiritual is, that they deal with particulars, and bring us in contact with persons that talk

weak sentiment and publish items of news. We *can* have communion with the spiritual world, with the very core of it. It is your call as Christians, as men and women, as souls, to seek it, to pray for it, to labor for it; you should count your life a failure, for it is a failure, if you have no experiences of it. You gain that communion by every method that quickens insight in your mind, so that the powers and processes of nature, the order and bounty of the universe, the mystery of the stars, the purity and grace of the light, the opening beauty and music of the spring, the full pomp of the summer, are transparent media through which you see the penetrating and substantial life of God, feel it working around you, and are drawn by it to cast yourself upon Infinite Love.

You gain it by reverence for justice, by confidence in generous truth as the stable wisdom for nations as for men, by such perceptions of the divineness of charity as shall impel you to open your soul and offer your purse to its entrance and dominion. You gain it by seasons of silence, penitence for sin, cleansing of the windows of the soul for the Divine searching, prayer for the heavenly light, and consecration, in the privacy of devotion, to the work and will of God. Thus you go into fellowship with the Infinite Spirit: the bonds of materialism are broken; your "conversation is in heaven"; you live less in the body than in the spirit; you are not a soul impris-

oned in flesh, but a soul endowed with a frame that gives you access to the Divine glory in matter, while you have immediate access to the Divine substance and assurance of Divine grace.

And thus, also, you increase your knowledge of the life to come. Modern spiritualism claims great advantage by assuring men directly that there is an immortal life. But you ought to believe *that* on deeper and nobler evidence than physical manifestations and alphabetic spellings and trance impersonations. You ought to believe that by the inward witness of the Spirit, by the feeling that virtue and sanctity and all filial qualities of heart are independent of matter and above it,—the best things in the universe, the things God loves unspeakably, which he will not let die, which cannot die because they are of his essence. You ought to believe that your friends live because they are forms for this life of God, and were born out of God to live for him, and be purified by his discipline, and blessed with his love forever. When Thomas, the doubter, insisted that he would not be convinced of the reality of the risen Jesus until he had put his fingers in the prints of the nails, Jesus said, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed : blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." And so, blessed are they, and purer is their faith, that turn with distaste from doubtful electric wonders and sorceries, and believe, by the soul's own witness, that truth and love are eternal, and that we are

eternal because we partake or may partake of those effluences of God. In that faith, kindred with Paul's, leading to the insight of Jesus, we hold intercourse with the departed. We go up into sympathy with the best that have passed on. We rise toward the plane of souls whose utterance is not through physical wonders, but through charity, peace, prayer, and benediction. O, how we de-grade communion with the departed by feeling that it is gained in any other way than by our spiritual elevation, or that it comes in other forms than by inmost and unspoken sympathy, "when all the nerve of sense is numb, spirit to spirit, ghost to ghost." If you have given a beloved life to the keeping of God, and long for influence from its risen substance, you will feel it and find it when you find God himself. It will not come to you till your heart is pure enough or still enough to feel His breath; and then you shall be conscious of its presence and sympathy :—

"How pure at heart, and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold,
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

"In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst say
My spirit is at peace with all.

"They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest."

When the conversation is in heaven through the possession of principles that uplift life, and insight that discerns God, and the light that visits and answers prayer, we have communion with the spiritual world, though we see not its outward scenery ; we are ready for its joys and duties ; we are in fellowship with the beloved that inhabit its peace ; we know and feel the privilege which the Easter Sunday celebrates.

1857.

VI.

LIFE MORE ABUNDANTLY.

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." — *John x. 10.*

"**H**AVE it more abundantly." These are the words that will determine the direction of our thought this morning. For I do not propose to follow the subject which the passage immediately suggests, that is, the manner in which Christ has given new life to the world, but to throw out some thoughts upon the general subject of life and the increase of it. We should all be led to see that the Infinite grace appeals to us, not exclusively or exceptionally through Christianity, but broadly through all the arrangements of Providence: — "Enter into life; receive more and more largely from its tide; it is prepared for you abundantly."

God supplies us at birth with a certain amount of animal vitality, and with certain faculties tending to various kinds and degrees of good in the universe, and by means of these we are to draw our life from the treasury of the creation and from God. Our success during our stay on the earth

is to be measured by the amount and kind of life we derive from the fountains that flow from the Infinite fulness.

Life may be increased, — this is the most important fact to be noticed and enforced in all that we are called to consider now, — increased almost indefinitely. Even in the physical department we may have it “more abundantly” by obeying the plain conditions. We are not fated to a short allowance or a fixed amount, but are endowed with the power of growing, and are tempted by a large, unmeasured possibility. Through exercise, and the proper choice and economy in food, we not only keep well, but we enlarge the stream of vitality. And the law by which a man purifies and refreshes the currents of his blood, makes the eye clear, the tendons taut, the nerves calm, the chest capacious, the step elastic, and knots the muscles by discipline to such sturdiness that, though once they were tired with a slight burden, now they will lift nearly half a ton, is a law that can be traced up into the mental and moral regions, and be seen to govern the spirit as well as the frame.

Life may be increased. A great many persons try to increase it by *intensity*. Dwelling on a low plane, developing none of the faculties of the highest order, they try to compensate the essential poverty of the career on which they start, by the concentrated interest they devote to it, and the number of objects or pleasures they crowd into their whirling days. This is what is usually

called now "a fast life." It may be a fast life of business ; it may be one of fashion ; it may be one of guiltier pleasure ;—whatever be the form of it, the distinction of it is the desire to do and live a great deal in a short time, and to escape the misery of a plodding existence in the common ruts, by giddiness in occupation, or the continued stimulant of the superficial sensibilities into delight.

Now, setting aside the absolutely forbidden and sinful sources of pleasure, there is much to be said besides mere satire and condemnation about those who live intensely in these days. In business many have no choice. The conditions are such that they must pledge every power of their manhood to the affairs of the store, the office, and the street, or nothing. They cannot control their occupation. While they remain in it, they are bound to it like Mazeppa to the wild horse, or Ixion in the fable to the wheel, and must follow its rate of motion. Then there are others who have never had the nobler faculties awakened early in life, in the home, or under their teachers, and stimulated with sacred appetite towards the higher grades of good which ennoble the human being ; and so when they are set to the common occupations of life, all the energies of their nature, if it be a powerful one, must issue through that single vent. Whatever music they make must be on one string, for no others have been chorded or tuned ; and of course they must make up in

rapidity of movement for the lack of breadth and variety of organs. And if a man is to be limited to one narrow range, either by an inward or outward necessity, we cannot blame him for pouring as much through the single channel as it can hold. It is a sad thing to be reduced to a mere top in this universe ; but if a man comes to that, we can't blame him if he prefers spinning fast to spinning slowly.

All aspects of an intense and superficial life are sad, but the saddest are those which appear when a man chooses it, especially the brilliant and profligate side of it, with the intention of increasing the quantity and richness of his experience, of living while he lives. It is under doom. Not only is it guilt, and liable to surprises of retribution, but it is folly. It is within the coil and pressure of slow but steady and unrelenting laws.

God has ordained a certain rate of motion or intensity for every faculty and every kind of work which body or mind can perform. All increase of this rate is purchased at the expense of fibre, of the faculty itself. If you crowd more business into a year than the rate of your brain's action and your frame's power of steady working can sustain, you are consuming capital. If you study faster than the mind can digest what you import, you are spending faculty. You may insist on more and stronger sensations than the system naturally supplies, but you shorten or paralyze life as the price. God has mixed a certain amount

of oxygen in the air. The proportion is small. A man may contrive apparatus for doubling the quantity he will breathe, in order to be more exhilarated. But he burns up his tissues as the inseparable condition. This is the law throughout the circuit of experience.

There is a story of an Eastern monarch who had been a noble ruler, but who received a message from an oracle that he was to live only twelve years more. He instantly resolved that he would turn these to the most account, and double his life in spite of destiny. He fitted up his palace gorgeously. He denied himself no form of pleasure. His magnificent gardens were brilliantly lighted from sunset to sunrise, so that darkness was never experienced within the circuit of his estate ; so that, whenever he was awake, the stream of pleasure was ever flowing, and even the sound of revelry was never still. Thus he determined to outwit the oracle by living nearly twenty-four years in twelve. But at the end of six years he died. The oracle foreknew and made allowance for his cunning scheme. No doubt, on his death-bed, the monarch saw the vigor and despotism of the laws of life with which it is vain for finite art and will to wrestle. The story is true in the spirit, though it may be fable in its details. It is one of those things of which we may say that it is real though it never happened. But it has happened essentially in all ages, and in untold thousands of instances. It is

only a legendary dress of the law, as true in the moral world as in the region of mechanics, that what is gained in intensity is lost in time. You cannot "have life more abundantly" by making the soul crouch down into the body, and diffusing it through the fleshy envelope, so that it loses the acquaintance with its own higher realm in the added zest of mortal pleasure. There is the most tragic waste of faculty. The end of such effort is disgust, weariness, and, in the inmost being, the sense of emptiness, folly, and unrest. For one, I would ask no more serious book of revelation on the side of law than would be made up by the confessions of vacancy, wretchedness, inward shrivelling, doubt, and despair, that have come from the most brilliant fast men of the world.

There is another kind of life that we may call *broad*. Life is increased in this way by putting out more faculties into communication with nature and society. In fact, it is by the unfolding of faculties that all additions to life are received. Each one of our powers is a receptacle for some element of the Divine good, but it is not like a goblet, and it does not receive as water is poured into a vase; its method is rather that of a seed. When put into proper relations with its objects it germinates and absorbs from the currents and forces outside of it, and transmutes them into its own quality and substance.

Some men's natures are simply little grass-plots, and only the smaller powers of their spirits are

put in communication with the bountiful life of Providence ; just as a grass-seed can weave nothing more than a slim strip of fluted green out of the air, the dew, and the sun. Some have wider areas, and are adorned with vines and grain and shrubbery. Others still have these and deeper faculties at work, giving us the munificence of nature transformed into lordly trees like oaks and elms.

It is inspiring to think how some natures live broadly enough to take in elements of growth from the farthest quarters of the visible universe. There are great naturalists living now that have received nutriment for their life from the lowest discovered stratum of the earth and from the most distant patch of milky light in immensity. This is a method of receiving life "more abundantly," and in saying now that, according to the Christian wisdom, it is not the highest way, I am not going to criticise it but to commend it. It has often been the case that the good which the world can furnish and the good which religion can furnish have been so contrasted as to make everything the first supplies appear shallow in comparison with the resources of the other sphere. But there is unmixed good to be obtained from the world by relating the proper faculties rightly to it, and it is a noble spectacle when a man is seen into whom life is pouring richly from all portions of the creation and of society. It is grand to see a man taking interest in truth, feeding his

mind with it, enlarging his hunger for it ; to see him not shut up in the interest of his own family merely, but concerned for the community, and pouring out some power from himself into the stream of general interest ; to see him not indifferent to social pleasures, but tasting them in proper subordination to the dignity of his being, and sunning his heart in their sweet light ; given to wide reading ; finding refreshment in music ; having a taste for art and refining it ; in a word, broadening his life in every direction where a distinct faculty which God has organized into his nature can solicit and absorb substance.

The more pure fountains that are practically open to the mind the better. The more powers we can have aroused in us, in days like these, when the temptations and pressures are so powerful that would make a man the mere handle of an implement or the fraction of a business, the better is it morally for the community. Think of narrowness of life in a world so rich ! It is as if a machine-shop furnished for building steam-engines should turn out pins. Think of being planted in this universe, as each human being is, and consider what comes of it usually ! If there were a rich prairie district as large as New England in which, though the most various and vital seeds should be dropped, and supplied with rain and light, nothing would grow but dandelions and white-weed, what a strange problem it would be for scientific farmers, what scrutiny would be

applied by chemists of the soil, what mourning over such waste would be raised by political economists ! The soil seemingly rich, the climate fine, and yet no trees, no fruit, no grain, no flowers producible, but only puny spears of almost worthless vegetable life ! And yet how often does this globe, poised amid the unveiled universe, turn out a man that, for breadth of attainment in knowledge and life, stands to the rest of his fellows as a majestic pine to a buttercup or a grass-blade ! I delight to think of men like Humboldt and Arago, Herschel and Agassiz, and to see in them that the riches of infinite truth are not wholly wasted on us ; that God does not rain his wisdom through all our air and pack his treasures beneath our soil entirely for nothing, so far as the enlarging of the boundaries of human spirits is concerned. And one of the pleasantest sights in society, next in grade to seeing a character beneficent and reverential, is that of a person busy with a mechanic's task or a merchant's toil, who insists on remembering that he has a mind, and who, through some department of science, — Botany, Geology, Zoology, Astronomy, Optics, or some regular reading in History or Biography or Travel, — keeps up communication with the world of truth without him, and sees to it that, while he gains in wealth perhaps, he does not shrivel as a man, but as he gains in money gains life, too, more abundantly.

Yet this life, though broad as we have thus interpreted it, may be superficial. The true abun-

dance comes not from intensity, and not alone from the number of objects with which we are in communion, but from *depth*. A life is rich in the proportion that it is deep; and it is deep to the extent that the moral and spiritual sentiments are active and healthy. This is no cant, brethren, or mere pulpit talk, because it is proper for such words to be spoken in the pulpit. This is solidly and scientifically true. Creeds may be false, but this is certain. Bibles may be mistaken, but this is unquestionable. The spirit that has a sense of justice quick and large, and lives by it in relation to his fellows, and tries to organize more of it through himself in society, lives deeper than the man of intellect and infinitely deeper than the man of pleasure. The affections are richer than the money-making and the truth-seeking capacities; and the richest affections are those which bind us consciously to the Infinite. Every kind of life is essentially superficial that does not bring the human heart nearer to the Infinite Presence and Love.

The heart of truth is gone, and the man has only the shell of it, if he does not see the expression of God's thought or providence in the splendors of order and majesty which the outward world discloses. A man may know all the secrets which the earth hides, every link in the chain of geological years, the structure and distribution of all the animal tribes that are and have been,—yes, he may untangle by his thought the meshes of

midnight light, and feel that he lives amid an order boundless in its reach and impregnable in its stability. And yet what if it is an atheistic order? What if he feels no breath of an Infinite presence upon his heart? What if he discerns the traces of no Infinite skill in the pillars and the dome of the mighty palace which his thought inhabits? What if no emotion is prompted in him, or tempted from him, of reverence to an all-penetrating intellect, of awe toward a sovereign holiness, of aspiration for the blessing of an all-sustaining love? What if his knowledge be such that it has banished poetry, mystery, and sanctity from the walls and the very air of nature? Then I say that, though the life be mentally broad, it is spiritually shallow. And the man who looks up to the stars with no knowledge of their vastness, but with instinctive recognition of a power of which they are mere sparkles, — the man who knows nothing of botany, but takes a simple flower in his hand as Christ took a wild lily on a Galilean farm, feeling an effluence from the creative goodness in its fragrance, — nay, the poor woman that could not stretch her mind to comprehend a single problem of the higher sciences, while none of them could shake her faith that this little globe which she imagines to be the centre of nature is bathed in providential interest, and that the grave of her child is the bond between her heart and heaven, — each has a deeper life, because a deeper faculty awakes to receive life from the world without,

than he whose brain is encircled with the icy crown of an unbelieving wisdom.

Of course a thoroughly proportioned life will have both breadth and depth ; but we must not fail to see that depth is the essential thing. That is connected with religion ; that every mind may have. There are very few that can escape the despotism of toil for bread. There are very few of us that could become eminent for breadth and large detail of outward knowledge, even if the liberty to cultivate the intellect to the full were granted to us. But the deepest life is possible for us all. Christ came that the lowest as well as the highest might have it more abundantly. It is offered to you and me independently of our strength of mind or fulness of learning. Astronomy we may not have time to study, or ability to master ; but God, who made all worlds, is as near to this one as to any, and as ready to fill our spirits as those that live in the most distant or brilliant star. It is a mistake to suppose that the most learned man now living has any more evidence of God by reason of his learning than has the humblest person here. If one can be an atheist in presence of a tree, or a moss-rose, or a human form, or the rising and setting sun, there is no reason why he should not be after reading the works of Cuvier and the Principia of Newton. It is a sacred instinct, not a chain of logic, by which we believe in God and hold to him.

And the religious life may be developed inde-

pendently of all our learning. How much knowledge do you need, my brother, to convince you that you ought to obey conscience? How wide acquaintance with literature to prove to you that you ought to bridle your selfishness, and trample a foul passion beneath your will? How great familiarity with libraries to assure you that a disposition of prayer and trust brings back a rich reward through inward harmony and a sense of peace? This is the deep life, and we may have it though we be burdened, though we have little time for the cultivation of mental powers and the faculties that make life graceful. Seek these others, but be sure that you neglect not to seek this. This overflows upon all other domains of life and enriches them.

And this, whatever else we have, is essential still. You can get along without classical learning, without reading Cicero, without knowing the attractive magic of chemistry, without knowing the procession of ages when the earth was forming, without knowing the distance of Sirius, or the orbit of Neptune, or the year when Alexander lived, or the science of a nation's prosperity; but you cannot get along without God as a power on your life and peace to your soul. You may slip along through years of business destitute of this; you may try to make up for it by money, toil, fashion, elegance, learning, and entertainment, — all of which, too, are good and necessary, — but with these alone there will be the inward want, —

deep crying unto deep, the lack of adjustment to the central reality, the mighty craving of the mightiest power within.

Ah, how many, gifted with everything else, have found life insupportable, and have longed for the grave, from lack of the consciousness of personal relation to Infinite Love !

“ Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly longed for death.

“ 'T is life, whereof our nerves are scant,
O, life, not death, for which we pant ;
More life, and fuller, that we want.”

It is no wonder that so many thousands, just in proportion to the awakening of their noble faculties, have found still no rest because the noblest has not been aroused. The more we stimulate the others, the more we need the religious to give peace amid the queries, problems, and torments which the others so often entail.

And we can have this deepest life by beginning to live for God. Curb your passions. Begin from this moment to listen to the inward voice. Consecrate your heart. Meditate upon the Infinite as the holiest and the best, set forth for our worship not in the stars so clearly as in the heart of Christ. Education is no more certain to bring knowledge than the humble obedience to these conditions is sure to bring the diviner life. The pipe attached to the main artery that conducts the bounty of the lake to our city is no more sure

to be filled with water than our souls are to be enriched with God if we desire it. Only clear the obstructions. Only see that the entrance of the channel is not choked. The best things are sure. Toil may not yield money. Carefulness may not protect health. Study may not banish error. The utmost art cannot keep off the final sickness and the call of death. But the Divine life is possible to every one of us. "God may be had for the asking." The spirit that will remain when money flies, and still make us rich ; that will not waste as the body weakens, but grow stronger, and make us inwardly well ; that cannot crumble into the dust to which the frame is converted, but will be liberated for larger development when the body goes into the treasury of nature for new services, — is offered to-day to every soul that has been animated by the Infinite breath. The heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, yet he will abide in every humble and contrite heart.

1859.

VII.

LESSONS OF THE DROUGHT.

"For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." — *Matthew* v. 45.

JESUS, desiring to find the amplest natural symbol of the Divine beneficence, weaves together into one sentence the sunshine and the rain, completing the rhythm which the impartiality of the quickening light began by the generosity of showers and the broad bounty of the storms. It is thus that they are related in the natural world. Together they fill out the sentence of Infinite care. The sun, fountain of light and heat, and storehouse of gravitation, is the chief type of the wisdom, love, and justice of the Infinite; but, as manifest to men, it is through its great office as the conjurer of clouds, and in the warm alternation of its beams with the drifting rain, that it fulfils the type of Providential mercy.

The Sabbath hours are well improved if they lead us to some fresh and deeper recognition of God in his physical government. And if we should turn our thoughts this morning into the channel of deepest present interest, unquestion-

ably they would busy themselves with the problem of the drought ; they would associate the richest favor of Heaven with the gloom of heavy cloud and the music of rain.

For many weeks the land has been afflicted (so it seems, at least, to our ignorance) by almost uninterrupted sunshine. From the Atlantic to the Mississippi the sky has bent hot, hard, and hollow over a parching soil. The hillsides are blasted with fever. The grass has been scorched. The fruits have shrunk. The trees are withering with thirst, and shedding shrivelled leaves upon the burning winds. The streams are dwindling ; brooks and ponds are drunk to their springs by the insatiable sun. No "ribands of silver unwind from the hills." The corn-harvest is smitten. The glorious promise of the early summer, pointing to full garners and cheap food, has died into the arid landscape of waste and destitution. Men have longed to see the beauty of clouds, but scarcely any vapory spots have stained the heated helmet of the heavens ; they have prayed for the cold storm-winds from the northeast to break the indigence of the sky, and some days the southwest has opened sirocco-caves and let loose airs that seemed outriders of earthquakes, laden with sulphur and smoke. It seems as though the earth was turning on its axis to be roasted by the sun. Day after day the heavens have been brass and the earth iron, the rain powder and dust. Read the accounts which every telegraph brings from

the West and North, and judge if anything less than the sultry rhetoric of Joel can describe it : " The seed is rotten under their clods, the garner is laid desolate, the barns are broken down ; for the corn is withered. How do the beasts groan ! the herds of cattle are perplexed because they have no pasture ; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate." Have we not been afflicted with incessant sunshine ? If the dark clouds should gather and the floods should burst over the continent, a chorus of devout joy would rise to Heaven from hearts, if not from lips, more grand than the written one in the Oratorio of Elijah, " Thanks be to God, he laveth the thirsty land !"

What are the religious lessons of the drought ?

First, it suggests to us the oscillations of the forces of nature, out of which our order and blessings are woven. The physical government of God seems most impressive and admirable when we see that it is not rigid and mechanical, but easy, graceful, full of play, — the harmony of constant alternations. We cannot prophesy weather and temperature as we can prophesy eclipses and the speed of the earth in its orbit. There are no statutes, there is no appointed calendar, which dry and wet, sunshine and cloud, must observe and fulfil. Yet the average of moisture and of heat is kept remarkably constant every year. The rains seem to flow by chance ; the light and gloom, the warmth and frost, do not fall in the same degrees, on the same days or weeks ; but

when the budget of the year is closed it turns out that the seasons, year by year, in the same districts, are almost all twins as to temperature and fertility. In fact, it is said that trees and plants are so nicely fitted to a certain average temperature that they would die if the mean warmth should fall five degrees for a succession of two or three years. With how subtle a skill must law be invoven by the great spirit into the world when the very frolic of the elements is order, and the gambols of winds and frosts, light and vapor, which no science can fathom and foretell, are the pulses of a vast, invariable harmony! Perhaps the whole range of natural religion presents no more beautiful and striking proof of Divine order in the physical world than the lecture which a scientific man might give to a class on rain, as he turned a globe or pointed to a map of the earth. On no two lines of latitude, he would say, will there be the same amount. The different winds, the nearness to or distance from the equator, the position inland or by the sea, on the east or west side of a mountain chain, will vary the quantity amazingly. But in each spot, he would tell his pupils, the yearly amounts will be very uniform. Here, he will tell them, for more than half the year metal will not rust under the open sky. Here rain will fall on almost every day of the year. In this spot a few inches only will damp the ground during a twelvemonth. But within these lines the quantity will not vary much from

three feet, and within these tropic boundaries enough will be discharged to drown the tallest men, while on a few spots more than twenty feet will be discharged from the clouds. Here it will be given in showers, there in storms; here with thunder, there in peace. Over this district not a drop will fall, — the sky will not be so much as stained with vapor, — while he can mark out another region where you can prophesy, almost to the hour, when a three-months' baptism will be inaugurated. The ratio of moisture, he would tell them, lessens in running from the equator towards the poles, lessens from the sea-coast inland; and to variegate the rain-map still further, he would distinguish countries where rains came in winter, others where they fall only in autumn months, and others still where they are exclusively a summer blessing. In this way are climates diversified, and the products of the soil and the riches and happiness of man steadily provided and sustained.

Is there not this wildness and waywardness in the earth's order, this apparent wandering of each element "at its own sweet will," that the religious sense might be swept and stimulated by it, that a benevolent mystery might always swathe the sportive beauty of the world? To see annual order in days of chance, the direct path of Providence in labyrinthine windings, the expression of intelligent goodness gleaming out of the volatile caprices of natural force, — is not this the lesson

for our spirits to learn? and that we might have the joy of so living that faith might have the quality of poetry in it, — is not this, perhaps, one reason why we are not set in a world whose order is mechanical, whose processes are all capable of being foreseen, flowing dull and regular as the machinery of a mill?

And once in a while the extreme of oscillation is touched, and nature pauses there awhile, as if to show us for a moment how awful it would be if chance were the ruler, — if we did not have a latent confidence that the energies of nature are held by a will that is friendly to our race. If I were in danger of becoming sceptical, I believe, that a fresh and vivid appreciation of the scientific revelations concerning our globe would appall me into faith. To think of this ball whirling and spinning about the sun, and to be an atheist! its covering less in comparative thickness than a peach-skin, and its pulp a seething fire, and to feel that we are at the mercy of the forces that lash it like a top around the ecliptic, and of the raving flames that heave and beat for vent; not more than an eighth of its surface inhabitable by man; seas roaring around him, tropic heats smiting his brain, polar frosts threatening his blood, inland airs laden with fever, sea winds charged with consumption; hurricanes hovering in the sky, earthquakes slumbering under our feet; the conditions of life dependent on the most delicate oscillations of savage powers over which the wisest man

is powerless as a worm, — to think of these and not to have any confidence or belief in a power superior to these pitiless forces, not to have an inspiring faith that the land was made for human habitations and experience, and is sheltered by a ceaseless love from the hunger of the elements ! Why, I could as easily conceive of a person making his home unconcerned in an uncaged menagerie as of a man at rest in nature, seeing what it is, and not feeling that it is embosomed in God ! Go to nature, my brother ; go to the unroofed universe ; go to the awful pages of science, not to learn your religion, but to learn your need of it, — to learn that you are houseless without the sense of God as overarching you by his power, pledging his care to you, twisting the furious forces of immensity into a protecting tent for your spirit's home.

Think of the fact which these weeks of drought suggest to us, that four months of steady sunshine would ruin this nation, yes, dry up the best civilization on the globe. Four months of uninterrupted summer sunlight — that which is God's chief bounty, that which is the most glorious symbol of his purity and love, would be as great a curse as could befall the nations which live in the temperate climes. It would breed general famine ; it would sweep away the cunning and wisdom of the world. So dependent are we on alternations of God's benefits ! so needful is the assurance which religious faith alone can give, that the pendulum of nature will not pause at the

extremity of its arc, but swing back in season to save the earth from utter desolation and death ! The drought that has been visited upon this country has extended over the greater portion of it, but it has not visited the parallel climates of the other hemisphere.

The enormous masses of vapor which on those hot, cloudless days were drawn into the upper air were carried by the west-winds across the ocean. England, France, Germany, and Spain have been largely supplied, most bounteously blessed, with rain and the rich promises of harvest. The atmospheric exchange has been greatly in favor of Europe. So that we see the world is one. Providence is not wholly forgetful of his children even in seeming calamities. Looking more deeply into the scantiness of water, we are led to the laws that oversweep the ocean, and bind both continents into unity of life in the regard of heaven. It was expected that we should be called upon to feed the European peoples with our corn more largely than before, because of their absorption in war. We have supplied them, but it is with our water itself, the raw material of grain, not with the distilled and ripened product. We have sent it to them, not in solid clippers, but noiselessly, in cloud ships, and poured it directly, unhampered by corn-laws, upon their fields. It is calculated that our loss in this country by the recent dryness will be nearly or quite two hundred millions of dollars, evaporated by the sun, — three millions

a day lapped up into its golden light. It would be a most profitable investment if the loss of it could only teach our whole people the mystery of nature, lead them to a devout recognition of God, ennoble their lives by insight into the beneficent plan in which their being is embosomed, and strike away from their minds those mechanical and atheistic habits of thought which rob the world of its poetry, and so hide from us the splendors of the Infinite, and rob us of the comfort of conscious dependence upon God. We paid more than two hundred millions for the war with Mexico, and the purse of the Republic felt the drain but slightly. And if the anxiety with which the farmers of the country have looked into the sky for two months past, the prayers they have offered in heart for rain, the sadness with which they have seen the corn wither and the grass grow fallow, could all be put to the account of religion, could deepen permanently the sense of dependence, and ingrain the habit of reference to God, so that henceforth showers should seem to be poured from his urns, and the alternations of sun and cloud be felt as his handiwork, and full harvests acknowledged as his bounty, the conscience, heart, and character of the land would be raised to such a degree that the millions lost for it would be unworthy of a thought in comparison with the new and nobler prosperity that would be showered upon the country. The drought would be laden with rivers of spiritual mercy.

The drought, too, suggests vividly at this time one of those poetic truths of nature which offer themselves as the richest symbols of religion. We live upon the rain. We eat and drink in one form or another the juices that drop from the clouds. Animal life is fed from the clover, grass, and hay in which the rain and dew are transmuted ; and we feed upon the vegetables at the second remove, and upon the animals at the third remove, from the water of the showers and the storms. The Greek mythology has a picture of the Goddess of Beauty as born miraculously from the foam of the sea. This is only a feeble statement of the scientific fact that all natural beauty, all the verdure of meadows, all the foliaged stateliness of trees, all the glory of blossoms and flowers, rise out of the sea, — are transformations of the moisture which the deep gives to the air. The book of Job asks the sublime question, "Hath the rain a father?" Modern science answers yes, it is the daughter of the sun and the ocean, and it is the soul — almost soul and substance — of all that clothes the earth and feeds its countless multitudes. O the rich mystery of the simple, tasteless rain! Drawn out of the salt reservoirs of the deep, and transmitted into a thousand liquors — a miracle at every step — for the food of man ! If God should drop our bread and meat, our rice and flour and fruits, every day into our homes by a myriad miracles, how solemnly would the fact touch our religious

sensibilities, how devout we should all be, how deep our feeling of dependence, how close would the Eternal Presence seem! But how is it now? Is the fact any less wonderful? Is not greater beauty, a more radiant and more various mystery added to it by the present arrangement of Providence? Is any chemist wise enough to tell how it is that this simple rain-water drawn fresh by the sunbeams out of saltness is turned, in the same field, by passing through different stalks and trunks, into apple-juice and pear-flavor, peach-blood and plum-pulp, — the liquid life of the nectarine, the strawberry the grape, and the melon? Can he explain how the lemon gets its acid from it and the sugar-cane its sweet? how it yields such full and luscious juices to the orange and such substance to the banana? how it gives its milk to the cocoa-nut, and to the pineapple its refreshing savor? All these, yes, and all the grains and fruits of the earth, grow out of the bitter sea. They come to us from the sea by the way of the clouds. Their common life drops from heaven as if to tell us that it is by heavenly bounty, as if to make us look up, — look up before we are bewildered by the subtle and entrancing miracles through which God delights our lips with it at last. And how few of all that are thus nursed by the clouds think at all of the circuit of the waters from the heaving brine to the vapors in heaven, and thence through the vines and orchard to the tables of men? How

many of us are wondering if God really cares for us; how many of us are uncertain whether there is an Infinite Providence, and are longing for some striking and startling evidence of his care! "O for a miracle, — to see but one!" perhaps we say.

When we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," this is what we pray for: "O Infinite Lord, continue to us, as heretofore, the order of the seasons, the balance of the forces that belt the world. Remove not thy control, spare not thy care, for we are dependent on thy watchfulness and mercy for the harvest which drops to us directly as the manna of the Israelites out of the sky." The sunshine is the wand which, waved over nature when the clouds have broken, calls out the countless bounties of the earth. If the rain is withheld it curses the soil and is the great destroyer. Such subtle fitness was there in the passage wherein Jesus linked them together in his sermon, — "For he causeth his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

Do not think that this is mere abstract religious truth, without practical import and power. Is it nothing, is it a trifle, to look upon nature with purged and penetrative eyes, to catch its meaning in the pure depths of a Christian heart, to live in it as Christ did, and see that it is full of whispers of the Highest, and that all its processes are symbols of God's spiritual approach to us and com-

munion with us? I do not believe there is any possibility of a constant and rich religious life until we feel that nature is quick with God, its laws his method, its forces his will, the light his favor, the rains his bounty, all natural beauty his smile, droughts and blights still the hidings of his goodness, and the interblended friendship of the forces of the universe the architecture of his provident wisdom, that man may have a home.

Not only by inviting our thought to the secrets of natural order does the dry season offer to stimulate the religious sentiment, but it gives us some new language, some important symbols for stating some of the important spiritual laws of life. The hot sunshine, withering the fields by its incessant floods, tells us anew that unmixed blessings in the soul's world are usually evils. Sunlight is the emblem of prosperity; darkness and clouds of adversity and trial. And in how many men has the religious life shrunk and dried because of uninterrupted fortune and plenty! Sufferers are drawn toward God; afflicted hearts feel the Infinite Presence; from cold and cloudy circumstances aspirations, prayers, and blessings go up to the Lord of love. Probably from every other condition of life, more religious recognition and service rises to the Father than from full and never-failing plenty and days of constant cheer. Not without insight did the writer of the book of Job say, "In prosperity the destroyer shall come," nor the author of the Proverbs declare, "The prosperity of fools

shall destroy them." The sunshine must alternate with cloud and shower before fragrance can be shed from the blossoms of the heart. Perhaps as the angels look upon some men who have never known any form of adversity, they see and say that there is too much sunshine on their souls, they are suffering for want of suffering, they are parching into worldlings because no clouds roll up into their sky, which are the most blessed creations of the sun, and which veil the heavens for a season from our eyes, that they may open them continually to our hearts. What depth of truth in the old utterance of the Bible, "But now men see not the bright light that is within the cloud."

Again, we see the spiritual truth that most good is done to us in our days of discipline, stated in the fact that the days of drought are really the days of supply. The sun is drawing water then; storing the upper treasure-houses, preparing for future rains and harvests. So the hot sorrows of the world, those which make the deepest draught on the great ocean of tears, fill the air of general sentiment with generous vitality, spot it with soft and benignant clouds, and robe our life with its sweetest verdure evoked by the soft streams of pity and sympathy. Follow out the threads of the best blessings of society, those feelings and facts that make us something more than traders and pleasure-seekers, and we are led soon to the woes and the mysteries of experience.

But, lastly, the sadness which this material dryness spreads over the face of nature suggests the features of a spiritual drought, from which, perhaps, we shall not be relieved so easily as from the outward one. The moral world is the chief vineyard of God, and alas, how little bloom, as yet, in history, has his eye seen upon it! All the mournful aspects which the grain and grass fields of the North and West now show to the human eye,—blight, dryness, dust, and dearth,—the spiritual acres unfold nearly all the time to the Eternal view. Sin is blight. Not one feature, influence, or product of it can be stated or illustrated by anything lovely and promising in nature. It is canker, mildew, rot, worm, fever, sand, barrenness, desolation. Every item of the dreary picture of natural suffering on the farms of our land is paralleled on a higher plane in the condition of souls that are destitute of heavenly rain. The grace of God, the visits and presence of his spirit, are presented in the Bible as dew and showers, large measures of the early and latter rain. Just as the trees have no inward vitality save what they absorb from the moist legacies of the sky, we have none save what comes to us from the infinite grace and life. Think of an irreligious, an atheistic tree or vine! One that should refuse to receive the dew and showers into its fibres; refuse to clothe itself with leaves, and distil juices within its bark, and fulfil its call to service by feeding and ripening its fruit! You cannot conceive

such a thing. If you could, you cannot conceive that a farmer would keep it on his land. An apple-tree that should deliberately store its twigs with bitter and poisonous balls, a grape-vine that should fill its clusters with ashes and dust! He would cut it down and burn it as a lump of vegetable iniquity, as more than a cumberer of the ground.

But with ourselves how is it? Why is God so patient with his world? Why so patient with us? Is it because of the service we render him? Is it because of the joy he finds in our spiritual verdure and beauty? We are set, like the vines and plants of the material soil, to receive the simple and common bounty of his grace from the sky, and work it over, each into peculiar virtues to enrich his treasury according to our inward nature and our circumstances, with a new flavor of goodness, — one nation, one climate of the church to be tropical and another temperate in the product of virtue. But we do not our work so well as the trees. They shrink and wither only when God withholds their moisture. We are barren because we will not take and fill our veins with his grace. We show the landscape of drought while there is plenty of rain and dew. God never leaves us without spiritual nutriment, — food for our reverence and faith, and sweet sentiments and blessed charities. And he keeps us in his vineyard while we do not adorn it; he is patient with us in the parental hope that we shall yet revive, and blossom

like the rose to his praise and joy. Let his goodness inspire us anew. Let us come closer to his spirit. Let us open our hearts to him, and blossom in his service. Let us strive to fulfil the sweet assurance of the prophet: "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green ; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

1854.

VIII.

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE HEATHEN DOLLAR.

"And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?" — *Matthew xxii. 19, 20.*

IN the light of the religion of Jesus, everything belonging to the circle of our life must be classed either as Christian or heathen. If we do not live any differently, or try to live any differently, under the instructions and privileges of Christian truth, from the way men lived before Christ came into the world, then we are essentially heathen, and our proper place is back in the centuries that preceded Jesus, or off in the countries that lie beyond the light of his religion. Every person whose goodness does not wear some hue, and is not vital with some element, which Jesus shed into society, — whose virtue is the gift of a happy temperament and good natural dispositions alone, and does not include the spirit of consecration and sacrifice, filial reverence and brotherly charity, — has a heathen character. I do not say that it is a base, a depraved, a thoroughly repulsive character to men, or even to God; perhaps the term good may fairly be applied to it; but it

is no better than character might have been in Rome or Ephesus before Christ sanctified our earth. It does not partake of the spirit which distinguishes our religion from the dull twilight of antique civilization. It does not rise above the level or possibilities of heathenism.

The church has generally divided men into two classes, — depraved and regenerate. This distribution is harsh; and it is untrue, for there are thousands of characters whom we cannot call regenerate, that it would be still more false to call depraved. But we may fairly run a dividing line across the moral world that shall separate people into heathen and Christian, according as they act, or endeavor to act, from the inspiration of Christ's religion, or as they follow the untrained impulses of their own constitution.

The old heathen empires have crumbled to dust. But if a state to-day does not recognize the supremacy of God, and the infinite worth of man in its objects and its laws, it is a heathen state. The only way in which it can be a Christian nation is by seeking the good of its citizens through its statutes and its administrations. If it aims to guard, establish, and extend peace and freedom, education, happiness, and order among the millions; if power is held and exercised as a trust, so that year by year the people grow wiser, happier, and better on account of the government they live under, the state is Christian; otherwise it is heathen. The titles of most of the despotic

monarchs of Europe, I believe, include the phrase, "Most Christian Majesty." But to judge by the spirit, objects, and result of their government, the robberies, oppressions, armies, and ignorance that compress the people into a groaning pedestal of a selfish aristocracy and a tyrannous throne, the accurate title would be, "His Most Heathen Majesty," the Czar of Russia, or Emperor of Austria, or King of Naples.

So in regard to the home. It is Christian in every case where something higher than a worldly spirit, or constitutional cheerfulness of temper, or simple refinement of intellect and taste, presides in it. It is sad that in the eighteenth century after Christ entered the homes of Cana and Bethany there should be any question as to what is the spirit of the homes in Christian lands. Sad enough that the privileges intrusted to parents for intermingling the spirit of reverence, faith, and prayer, the heart of charity, and the serious view of life as a trust, with the very structure of the conscience and the mind, should be so widely neglected, so that out of the myriad of houses which might all pour out a rill of Christian life into the stream of society, only here and there one can be called a Christian home, a young church, which the spirit of Jesus secretly hallows ; but most of them are little above the homes of Corinth or of Athens in the influence they exert for the redemption of the soul.

The same distinction runs into the world of

trade. A merchant is either heathen or Christian. Where honor underlies the counting-room, and the warehouse is built on the rock of integrity, so that floods and storms cannot wash it away; where the trader or the broker feels that unspotted character is worth more than all money which stains or shadows reputation, and that any fortune would be gained at a desperate bargain that turned upon a falsehood or a trick, there is a Christian merchant, there is a mercantile structure that stands out in the light of Christian civilization, and belongs to the landscape of Christ's church as much as the spire of the meeting-house, or the intricate beauty of the cathedral dome. But where gain is the object, and selfishness is the law, of the office, the factory, or the store, and the man hesitates at nothing which is safe that will increase his profit line, and bends his soul to the very lowest customs and artifices that will allow him to remain in the arena of traffic, the man is a heathen merchant, and belongs, with all his estates, among the pagans of ancient Sidon and the corrupt traders of Tyre.

The incident in the text leads us to apply the same distinction to money. Jesus took a coin in his hand and asked, "Whose image and superscription is this?" It was a Roman coin. The head and the name of the emperor were stamped upon it. It was the money through which the Jews in Palestine paid tribute to the power of Rome. Its currency showed that the Hebrews were a subject

people ; and there was a phrase with the Pharisees running thus : "Wheresoever the money of any king is current there the inhabitants acknowledge that king for their lord." All this is symbolic of spiritual meanings. A dollar may be Christian or may be heathen. The coins we use in our daily traffic are of different metal, and are differently stamped with mottoes and devices, according to the country from which they come. Some of them show the pillars that represent the government and power of Spain. Some of them bear the eagle of Mexico. Now and then we have a gold one beautiful with the insignia of France. The English sovereign wears the likeness of the imperial queen, and our own dimes and dollars and eagles show to the eye the countenance of Liberty, and the royal bird whose extended wings are symbolic of the two oceans that stretch out from the body of our continental territory.

But besides these visible pictures which the die impresses upon the metal, all our money has a moral stamp. It is coined over again in an inward mint. The uses we put it to, the spirit in which we spend it, give it a character which is plainly perceptible to the eye of God, — a character as clear as if it were written on it in human language. All our dollars, beyond those spent for the primal necessities of existence, of course are expended at the bidding of certain tastes and loves, and the proportion of our spending for the luxuries of life betrays the dominating forces of

our character, and so infuses a representative quality into the coin.

Money is a great implement for affecting society and our own spiritual welfare. The controversy which Christ has with the world concerning the use of money is, not that so much is used for material objects and needs, not that so much is spent for the refinements, the graces, and the elegant pleasures of society, but that of the vast millions that are spent every year for purposes beyond the bodily and family wants, such a very slight proportion is consecrated to beneficent, generous, merciful, holy purposes. It is that so few of our guineas and eagles are coined over at the Divine treasury, and bear witness to our consecration to the cause of truth, the will of God, and the good of man. This is the great probe-question for all persons that are not positively poor, at any rate for every wealthy man, What proportion of your surplus income do you devote to the doing of good, to the help of religion and humanity? If your yearly list of expenses should be inspected in heaven, what report would it bear as to your reverence, your faith, your charity? How much of the silver tide that is steadily flowing from your treasury quickens the good causes of the world, helps the race, and makes the heavens rejoice? In a word, how many Christian dollars have dropped from your hands out of the hundreds that you have scattered? A man of means has the right to use money for the gratification of del-

icate tastes, and for the purchase of refined pleasures. It is well that, in a community like ours, money should be held ready to procure the enjoyment of travelling, to deepen the love of nature, or to purchase books and pictures that will charm the eye and adorn the home, or to listen to lectures and concerts that will bring the soul into communion with the best eloquence and music of the time, or to increase the pleasure and multiply the bonds of graceful social intercourse. But so long as man is a religious being it is not right, it is a crying sin, that we should be so unfaithful with our purses to the highest of all claims upon our gold, and that, as soon as we rise above the calls for food, clothing, and shelter, we calculate how much we can spare for selfish enjoyments, and never take into account the duty of apportioning some of our means to the highest calls, so that our contributions for God's purposes shall bear their proper ratio to what we freely give for our own gratification and joy. The Almighty made us religious beings as well as artistic beings ; he has given us a conscience as well as an ear for music, a heart bound in with the fortunes of humanity as well as a taste for melody and beauty. The man that always seems to have a dollar or two, or even five dollars, ready for a concert that offers an attractive bill, and always feels poor as soon as a good object is proposed which seeks his contribution, who curtails on charities to be liberal on pleasures, — such a man sins ; he corrupts

the coin of the world ; he swells the number of selfish and heathen dollars in society ; he is faithless to his duty and privilege of coining over some of the wealth that is given to him into Christian silver. Alas, how many such men there are among us ! They seem to have the purse of Fortunatus, inexhaustible, so long as opportunities invite them to feed their elegant appetites ; the bank has money in abundance for pictures and pleasures, fine dresses and sight-seeing, beautiful books and operas and travel ; but when a case of distress is mentioned, or a large demand for some good institution presents itself, or a Christian subscription-paper alights upon their desks, they are *so* poor. How suddenly their circumstances have changed ; they feel compelled by conscience to retrench their expenses ; business has not been so good of late ; if their good wishes will help you, you can go away strengthened from their presence, otherwise your call is wasted time.

Again, then, we say that it is the duty of every man with any means to observe proportion in his surplus expenses ; to have a conscientious order with regard to the service which his superfluous dollars discharge. Over against every prominent allowance for a personal luxury, the celestial record-book ought to show some entry in favor of the cause of goodness and suffering humanity ; for every guinea that goes into a theatre, a museum, an atheneum, or the treasury of a music hall, there ought to be some twin-guinea pledged for a truth,

or flying on some errand of mercy in a city so crowded with misery as this. Then we have a right to our amusements and our graceful pleasures. Otherwise we have no right to them, but are liable every moment to impeachment in the court of righteousness and charity for our treachery to heaven and our race.

I love to think sometimes of what goes on in the mint, where our country's currency is struck, during the course of a year. A stream of virgin silver and gold is flowing into its doors, steadily, every day. From California and Mexico and Peru and Russia and Australia, perhaps, it finds its way there through the pipes of commerce, — innocent metal, valueless in itself, fresh from the treasury of the earth, whence it was arrested by the enterprise and toil of human hands. And there it is purified, smelted, strengthened by alloy, and prepared for the die, and re-born into beautiful coin. All of it receives the impress of our country's emblems. The image and superscription of Cæsar, the State, are stamped upon it. But, from the moment when it goes forth into the world, it ceases to be merely political coin, it will not serve the necessities of commerce alone. How might a man moralize over a large heap of those beautiful gold drops before they go to have their purity soiled by the rough usage of human hands. How many of you, he might say, are going to be the currency of selfishness, to be coined over by the chill spirit of avarice, and to have the symbol

which the mint has left upon you effaced by the figure of Mammon, and the miserly mottoes that will be graved upon you when you become the instruments and objects of selfish greed? Some of them, the prophetic eye might see, were going to be spent for intemperate indulgence, to be offered on the altar of Bacchus, and so morally to be recoined with his reeling figure bloated upon it, and that awful text from his gospel, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Others, it might be seen, were on their way to the hot prizes of the gaming-table, the innermost sanctuary of the pit, where feverish eyes should be fastened upon them and desperate hearts stake their last treasure for them, and where they seem almost visibly to gleam with the fiery portrait of Satan, his chosen medallions, that burn every hand unlucky enough to win. Others go to purchase learning and culture and the recorded thoughts of genius, and upon them the image and superscription of Apollo and Minerva are outlined. Some, again, will wear the forms of the Graces or the Muses, inlaid into their substance by the human tastes that make them serve as ministers. If the eye could foresee what ones would go on missions of mercy, would strengthen the interests of truth, would put wings on good ideas, would endow beneficent institutions with new power, would carry sympathy and help to the bed of some poor sufferer, kindle a fire upon the desolate hearth, spread a meal upon the table of destitu-

tion, clothe a pallid and shivering child, or give it some training of mind or heart, — those, a man might say, are the Christian coins. It should seem that they ought to gleam more brightly among the heaps where they lie. The form of Christ is really stamped upon that silver and gold, and his superscription, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," enwreathes his image with immortal truth. Those are the dollars that look precious in the sight of heaven. The touch of benevolence transmutes them into eternal possessions. Who would not wish to own them? Who, when the hour of death comes, would not prefer to have spent such coin? What pleasure or profit would then look so bright, or give such comfort as the retrospect of these golden benefactors of the world! "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven," said Jesus. We cannot take the currency of this world there, but every dollar, every dime, we have spent, so that the picture of Christ has been stamped upon it, has become spiritual currency. Moth and rust cannot corrupt it; it passed on the instant after our use of it upward as an eternal investment in the treasury of God.

"Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's." Some of our money belongs to Cæsar, or this world; but some of it also belongs to God, — belongs to him just as some of our thoughts and our reverence and our heart's gratitude and worship belong to him. It is theft, it is robbery

to keep it back. Everything that may do good, which men hold in their possession, is a trust,—genius, influence, reputation, time, money, everything that may do good, is a trust, and if we withhold it from doing good we violate a commandment that reads, “Thou shalt not steal”; we deny the truth which runs, “All souls are mine.” The money which we spend is heathen, all of it, if some portion of it is not devoted gold. In some countries there are tithe-laws which set apart one tenth of all the income of the people for the support of the Church. We have properly wiped those from our statute-books. But we shall never wipe out the supreme tithe-law written upon our conscience, justified by the fact that we are put into this world for service and under bonds of trust, which rightfully call for a portion of our income and substance for the service of God. Men deny more the doctrine of trust and feel less the duty of service in respect of money than of all other things. And if Christ could return to the earth now and sit in judgment upon us, and show us the way of duty, the consecration of money would be the great thing, I believe, which he would strive to impress upon us; and if he could call us all before him with our coins,—all the coins that we have spent in our years of responsibility,—one of his most serious questions would be, as he inspected each of them, “Whose image and superscription is this?” And as he saw them so generally stamped with the figures of

Pleasure and Mammon, he would ask in a tone that would search the secret places of our souls, "Where are those that have been rendered unto God by the good that they have done in the world?"

If we have not considered our duties seriously enough in this matter, now is the time deliberately to accept them. There are a thousand ways in a city like this in which our coin may be pledged to the Almighty, and take the image and superscription of Christ. The most important method I would speak of is direct and continuous interest, on the part of each family that has a competence, in some destitute person or family, whose condition they can know, and around whom their care and sympathy may be a wall of protection. The season is upon us that suggests our duties to the needy. The suffering in Boston every winter is immense. But it might be greatly relieved, almost wholly so, if, in addition to the institutions that have organized Christ's love, each family that can afford to would seek out some one miserable chamber or desolate cellar, and do what it can to supply its inmates with work and food and cheer. And then what an immense spiritual benefit would result! How much good would be done to our own characters, how much sweet peace breathed around our own hearts, from the consciousness of the heavenly benediction! how much joy from the assurance that some of our dollars, commissioned on errands of mercy, were bearing the image and superscription of Christ!

Or, again, we may consecrate some of our dollars to the most advantage by practical interest in organizations of benevolence, especially in that which was started last winter in this part of the city, and which this winter will stretch its network over the whole of Boston. It is not casual charity, emotional charity, but systematic and principled charity that we need for the help of our characters and the purity of our money. This is what the poor need also. And this they can have through this generous and vigorous organization, if we will help that organization by contribution and sympathy. It will do incalculable good this winter among us, if we will determine that it shall, if we will replenish its treasury with Christian dollars, that will stand as a bulwark against the social heathenism that overshadows the poor.

Thanksgiving-time is nearing us, too, and we may consecrate some of our gold in the good old custom of substantial charity to the needy. Let us remember the poor that day, at least. Let us seek some family in straitened circumstances, and confess the law of brotherhood by spreading for them a full board, around which they may bless the good Providence for the bounties of the harvest. Let not that beautiful custom die out of the New England heart. Let us consecrate some day of this week to such worship of charity by our hands. They are Christian dollars that kindle up the spirit of joy in chilled hearts, and carry the light of hope and courage into gloomy homes.

I X.

THE DIVINE ESTIMATE OF DEATH.

"For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him." — *Luke xx. 38.*

DURING the last few weeks my own thoughts have been more than usually engaged with the problem of death. September, according to my pastoral experience, seems to be a crisis-month,—the season when the great destroyer marks those who are to be called soon into his silent realm. From the beauty and peace of the summer, not overshadowed by the knowledge of a single death in the parish, scarcely disturbed by the tidings of any serious sickness in our families, I returned to the city to see the joys and hopes of many homes suddenly smitten; to witness the sorrow of those who watch the shadow swift travelling towards them, which, before long, must wrap their households and their hearts in gloom; and to meet, with such consolations and prayers as Christian faith can offer and inspire, friends who are rent by the various forms of anguish with which death, in the various modes of its dispensation, wrings the soul. A mother taken suddenly,

in perfect health and early womanhood, from a home pervaded with domestic peace and joy ; a father called away in the full strength of manhood from labors just ripening into large prosperity, and affections that were strewing his way with the sweetest flowers ; a bereaved wife, stunned by the tidings of a husband's sudden death by pestilence in a Southern city, just when a welcome was ready for his promised return ; the convulsive grasp of the hand, and a strong man's bitter tears, amid the throng on State Street, as he told me that he must soon part from a companion more precious to him than the light of the sun, and whose strength he had supposed the summer would revive. These are some of the experiences which, in two or three recent weeks, have concentrated the interest of my own mind and heart upon the mystery of death.

And now again, this morning, our prayers have been asked and given for another sorrow. One who had worshipped here ever since this spacious house was consecrated has been lifted up, since we last met, to worship in the building of God, "the house not made with hands." After a long life, almost filled up to the measure of threescore years and ten, — a life blessed with ample measures of domestic happiness, and yet tried with searching griefs ; a life of patient fidelity to secluded duties ; a life whose latest stages lay through physical distress from which hardly an hour was wholly free, but still hallowed by an uncomplain-

ing religious resignation, ceased suddenly without a moment's warning, as quietly as a tired infant sinks to sleep. And to-day the aged, afflicted, lonely husband turns to God with the prayer of the solitary soul, and the bereaved family come with chilled hearts to seek the warmth and comfort of the Infinite Love.

Such are the ways in which one who observes the ordinary dispensations of providential trial, the common order of human suffering, is made to feel the heart's need of the highest faith, and to search for the goodness that ordains bereavement. Yes, and in addition to all these single and more private instances of sorrow, the whole community has been startled and shocked, as never before in recent years, by the terrible tragedy of the sea.* Into more than a hundred homes how have the tidings of it penetrated as lightning, desolating hearts and withering forever the earthly possibilities of joy! Let us not dwell upon this. The words are profane that attempt to describe such sorrow. With a prayer for those who are smitten thus, called to meet a heavier woe than they who went down in the sea, let us leave them with God. How did that news go into our homes, breathing strange terror around the fireside! How did it intrude on the exchange between the hearts of merchants and their schemes of gain! How has it sent a thrill of horror over the whole continent, interrupting in a thousand towns the earthly

* The loss of the steamer Arctic.

avocations with its message of death! How deeply has it sunk into countless hearts, leading them to silent questionings of the ways of Providence! I know not how it has been with others, but with me every incident of that scene, gathered from various reporters, and individualizing its mighty woe, has been as a stab like that of a near personal loss; and during these last few days I have been haunted by the vision of that proud steamer settling into the gray-curtained ocean, whose waves the skill of man had constructed her to trample with foaming wheels, and plunging into the salt Atlantic with her precious freight of hearts, whose thoughts of home and prayers to God were quenched in a moment in its deep, still solitudes.

This picture has led all, no doubt, more or less to unusual interest in the questions of Providence. How shall we think of death? In the light of what principles shall we look at its suddenness, its terrors, the inequalities of its dispensations, and the miseries it scatters so thickly in the path of those that are left behind? Religion as a system of truth finds its highest expression, brings all its truths to a focus, as it were, in the view it reveals of death. And so any man's faith or want of faith, the quality of his faith or the degree of his scepticism, breaks out in the tone of his feeling concerning this greatest question that tries the human mind. How can it be benevolent in Providence so to desolate the earth? How

can it be benevolent to blight so many blossoms of homes, in sweeping such crowds of the young by ruthless diseases into the grave ; to hurry away so many of the mature when their strength and ministry are so much needed ; to snatch so many of the guilty without warning in their sin ; to close up the path of duty and pleasure before such multitudes to whom life was just opening full of promise, and whose stay here is essential to so many hearts ? How can God permit in his world such scenes as that which has recently harrowed our bosoms, or look down complacently upon all those terrible wrecks which during the last few months have invested the ocean with such pitiless might ? Men would have saved those endangered lives if they could. Every resource of wealth and nautical skill would have been freely pledged, from a hundred ports along our coasts, to rescue the passengers of that pierced steamer, if her peril could have been prophesied. "Did Heaven look on, and would not take their part ?" Why are wars possible, and why must tens of thousands of dedicated men die seemingly for nothing ? How shall we think of death, and make the dispensation of it harmonize with any faith in the goodness of the Almighty ?

I will not pretend, brethren, that we can understand it wholly. In a world where we cannot comprehend anything fully, it would be strange if we could thoroughly understand the mission of death, and the beneficence of its ordering in the

plan of Providence. But there are one or two great principles which we should keep in mind in connection with it, that, in my view, do relieve the most trying instances of it of much of their gloom. And it certainly is a great thing, a most desirable thing, to bring the exceptional cases — those in which its mystery presses the heaviest upon our sensibilities — into the general range of the difficulties that attend it; to gain such a view of it that the extraordinary cases shall seem no more perplexing than the average ones, and will come easily under the general law. Many persons, I doubt not, whose faith is not tried much by the common messages of death that sunder human fellowships, and inflict sorrow upon hearts, are greatly disturbed by these unusual instances, by such awful accidents as the recent one. If they could get light on these exceptional cases, if they could feel that they are no more hard to understand than the ordinary ones, their minds and religious feelings would be greatly relieved.

Of course, the highest light would be gained on the whole subject if we could know how God regards death; what estimate he puts upon the continuance of our mortal years, and with what death is associated in his omniscient eye. I believe we must settle down upon this principle, that God does not make any account of physical life in his government of the world. You may be startled at first by the statement, but it is true and sublime, and there is comfort in it. We ac-

count our physical existence everything ; we would give everything generally in exchange for it ; we cling to it with all our thoughts and with all our strength, as our chief possession ; we cannot see beyond it ; unless we have the clearest Christian faith, our plans spontaneously assume the fact that death is the end of everything desirable ; and so, to us, the greatest of mysteries is that by which the threads of life are hacked and snapped so lawlessly from the earthly loom. But with God this physical existence is a trifle. And why? Because to him there is no death. He looks over that mist which is so thick before our vision, and he sees only life in his universe. To him there are no dear forms buried in the sea, no mothers imprisoned in the tomb, no children hidden under the sod, no companions vanished into an all-surrounding gloom, no soldiers blown from the cannon's mouth into non-existence, but a wide, illimitable sphere of light and vitality and blessed discipline. In the Infinite view there is not a cemetery in the universe, there is not a grave on any globe that gleams in the sky. For there is no cessation nor interruption of life caused by that which seems to us death. The body, as he looks upon it, is the spirit's garment only ; and however we are called to meet death, whether by slow disease or by water or by fire or by tempest, at the end of years or in youth or in the full powers of manhood, on the sick-bed or the battle-field, to his vision it is but the stripping off of a robe and the liberation of

the clothed essence into higher forms of being. "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living ; for all live unto him."

This is why the forces and arrangements of this world seem so unfriendly to human life ; this is why we are permitted to be at the mercy of the tornado and the pestilence, of changes of air, and the countless perils and accidents of sea and land, where no guilt can attach to those that are snatched away. This lower form of life, I believe, is of trifling consequence to the Infinite Spirit, because to him there is no death whatever, because to him that which seems death to us is less even than sleep,—a vanishing of the real person from one realm of life and a hastening into another and a higher one.

O, if we could have for a moment a glimpse of the universe as God looks upon it!—one glowing, vivid, boundless field of life ; every death-chamber an anteroom of the infinite temple ; every death-hour a triumph-hour of entrance through an arch of shadow into eternal day ; the whole earth exhaling spirits into the upper heights of life, as the soil and the ocean send up their moisture in constant and invisible streams ; no more loss of souls than there is of drops when the briny ocean yields its fresh vapor to the touch of the warm sun,—if we could see this wondrous and magnificent process of life, of which seeming death is one of the dark agencies, although it might not dry our tears and subdue our grief, would it not lift off all the burden of mystery? Would it not, in our

theories of the world, at least remove the gloom that settles so heavily over the sudden calls of those we loved, and the accidents that hurry crowds of our fellows beyond our mortal sight? And so, brethren, I believe it is our feeble vision and scepticism that darken life so with the mystery of death. Try to think of the world as God looks upon it, and the problem is illumined. We think very faintly of the future, while to God it is the great reality. Our thoughts gravitate around the tomb, which, in God's regard, is the point of ascension, and no more gloomy than that hill in Galilee from which Jesus floated up into heaven.

Talk to me of this life, as so many Christians talk, as though it is a final state of probation, deciding our eternal state and destiny, and I cannot understand it. I cannot understand the unequal appointments of privilege; the unequal providences that summon souls away from it; the accidents and chances that hurry thousands, unprepared, into a terrible eternity, while others, more guilty, live on for repentance and the opportunity of salvation. Nay, I can understand so much of life as this, that in such a light it is a mighty misfortune and horror. But let me feel, by a thorough faith of mind and soul, that it is the first stage of endless existence, and that God sees it all-embraced with infinite light, with opportunities of infinite training and blessedness, swarming with beings whose bodies, broken by death, will shed an undying substance into a stable uni-

verse, and however solemn the duties of life may be, and however serious the alienation from God in any heart must be, and however bitter the bereavements which sudden death and fearful accidents ordain must be for those who lose the sweet companionship that blessed their earthly way, still the aspect of the world is cheerful, and, rising by faith into that view which the Infinite Spirit takes of this existence, I can say it is all-glorious and inspiring, since neither tribulation nor distress nor persecution nor famine nor nakedness nor peril nor the sword can separate us from the love of God and his great boon of life.

The public belief of our day does injustice to the spirit of Christianity in the view it inspires of death, investing it with a cheerless, chilly solemnity that is pagan in its influence, making men cling with tighter tenacity to this world, as though it contains, and is, our chief good. Something awful is suggested as lying just the other side of its shadow, fearful even to the saint, while God's hungry laws are portrayed lying couched, — fierce, tiger-like, — to spring upon every unsanctified spirit as it emerges from the grim gateway of the grave.

Brethren, the solemnity of religion attaches to character, not to death. States of soul are solemn things. The question what principles rule you is a solemn question. But death, the disrobing of the flesh, is not peculiarly so, — not any more so than all life is, not any more than any crisis-season of life

is which shows you what you are, and makes you taste the quality and sediment of your disposition and love. God is as just and good beyond the grave as here. If you are not afraid of him here, there is no reason why you should fear him there. He rules you, rewards or punishes you, in the deeps of your soul now just as he will there. You are in his presence every moment. His government is a spiritual, not a mechanical one. He has no visible judgment-seat. If you are not afraid to go to sleep under the guard of his still starlight, and to wake in the morning in his lighted world of matter,—to wake with the same character you had when you slept,—you ought not to be afraid to wake in the luminous world of spirit into which we rise after the quick unconsciousness of death. It is God's love you rise into. You yourself are the only thing to be afraid of. Sin is all you ought to fear. And the coarse eloquence that invests death with such lurid terror degrades the real importance of all life, turns off the fear of the soul from where it should always rest, and makes punishment seem worse than evil. It is just as bad for you, and just as sad a thing, just as dangerous, to retire to-night with a mean, selfish, unchristian disposition and rise to-morrow with it, as it is to walk into the shadow of the grave with it, and take it into the full splendors of eternity. It is the Infinite love you deny or discard in both cases,—the love that would do everything for you, if you would open your heart. Sin is

gloomy. Death itself is cheerful. It has the sublimest relations. It opens the way for sinner and saint into the morning, into new opportunities of service and worship, into new discipline, into just as much joy as the state of the heart will permit and can receive. If you care for life at all, you should contemplate death with triumph.

You will observe that I have called attention to this principle, the view which God takes of death, in order to show that, as he looks upon the universe, all apparent death is the same thing, in whatever form it may come, and thus, that the great accidents, the extraordinary incidents, are no more mysterious to him than the common ones ; since, so far as those that seem to die are concerned, the whole experience is nothing but a lifting up of souls to an intenser life. At every moment all the spirits that ever have been on this globe and all other globes are living unto him. "Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death," — put it away, annihilated it, — has an object of thought that is the standpoint from which as Christians we are to regard the world. The real mystery of death in its relations to Providence is thus reduced to the sufferings of those that depart and of the friends that remain. If all those who perished physically on board the Arctic had died singly, at different times in the course of the next year, or month, in their homes, by ordinary disease, surrounded by their friends, no person's faith perhaps would have been strongly

tried by contemplating the account of loss and suffering, item by item. It would not have strained the faith in Providence, in the average of religious men, very hard. But when all are brought together in one picture and in one moment, and the whole agony of that hour is associated with the anguish of friends that hear the tidings, our religious convictions are assailed as by a battering-ram. And yet, for those who died in the sea the physical suffering may not have been so great as the ordinary diseases that extinguish life would have caused; doubtless it was not so great as some of them endured who were saved from the catastrophe. And so far as each person that was taken is concerned, the death in God's sight was a gain. As each one of them went into the higher domain of life, the exchange of modes of existence was seen and felt to be a blessing. We must not therefore judge of Providence by the imperfections of our mental capacities in appreciating the facts of his government. Our bodies are but the boats of the spirit, in which it sails on the sea of matter; and if our faith is not startled much when they plunge singly into the deep, leaving the spirit that was buoyed in them alone with God, ought our faith to be startled any more because we see scores of them go down together, leaving scores of their immortal pilots free to enter together the ethereal sphere? If we could see, in one moment, all the deaths that take place to-day, and all the sorrow

that attends them, it would wring our sympathies most fearfully ; but would it alter the fact that death is the introduction to a higher life ? Would it dim in any way the splendor of the scene as God looks down upon it, or change the principles which we should feel to be applicable to each isolated instance of departure ? To God, seeing that his nature is perfect, there are none of the surprises, none of the shocks, none of the half-views, which shake us and wrench us and becloud us so. He looks over the whole field, over the whole plan of discipline, every moment ; while we are lamenting over shattered hopes and terrible disasters with tortured sensibilities, the souls in his realm are rejoicing at the crowds of newcomers into the splendors of eternity. Our death-wails here are birth-songs there.

And as to the suffering of the friends that are bereaved by losses, we can, I think, in the light of one or two principles, see more benevolence in it than the first shock would lead the soul to suspect. Here, again, we must take God's point of view, and not man's. It is plain that death is a necessity here ; that we cannot live in physical frames, on the globe, forever. It is equally plain, I think, that it is very much better that death should not come regularly, and sweep away only frames that are aged, and have nothing more to live for on earth. Who will doubt that there have been most purifying and blessed influences left upon souls by the death of those they loved, — by

the removal of an infant, or a sweet child, or a revered father, a dear mother, a precious wife, an honored husband? If everybody lived to a worn-out old age, if death were a calculable experience, there would be no hallowing sorrow; there would be no interweaving of the spiritual world with this by the tenderest affection, as there is now through the casual strokes of the destroyer. If the earth is so sensual, selfish, sense-bound, and hard-hearted now, what would it be if there were none of those softening, humanizing, faith-inspiring ministries of sorrow?

And if God has this meaning in ordaining that no age or state shall be free from a call to a higher world, can we not see that he intends to teach us something by the frequent suddenness and unexpectedness of departure; by the fortuities, so terrible to the senses, that often sweep hundreds, in a moment, beyond our sight? May it not be that he tries to teach us in this way something of the frailty of life; to impress it upon us, as it could not be done under any other order? And does he not see, perhaps, that enough spiritual good is done by this outwardly sad feature of temporal discipline, to atone, and more than atone, for its apparent terror?

And if spiritual good is done by such a method, it is beneficent in God to maintain it. When your child cries for something which you know will injure it; when it cries to sit up when you know its frame needs sleep; when it insists on playing and

being happy in its own way, when you know it must not have its own way ; when it is in bitter distress at some discipline which you know is for its good, — the world is dark to the child ; its whole universe is enrobed in sadness and mystery for a moment : but you think nothing of it ; it is all clear enough to you ; for you see that nothing could be so bad for the budding nature as to be happy for the moment, after its own caprice. From God's point of view it is the same, I believe, with his vast family. Whatever will increase, or contribute to increase, our spiritual qualities, is perfectly beneficent in his vision ; and as he looks upon the moral universe, there is light in these sudden, terrible catastrophes of his providence, since those whom we speak of as dead are only lifted higher, and since the permission of such swift removals tends to the culture of faith and piety here.

Another principle, too, although in a lower plane than those we have thus far treated, should be considered in relation to such disasters as the recent loss of the ocean steamer. It is one of the plain facts in God's government of the world that no unusual providence of his will interfere to lessen the need of human wisdom and experience in mastering or in respecting the laws of nature. One of the great objects of human life plainly is to gain knowledge, and to act upon it, in regard to physical and settled laws. And God deliberately allows the greatest expense of mortal life in

perfecting a great principle. How many lives are spent in purchasing an experience of medicines and a knowledge of the healing art and a perfection of surgical skill ! Wherever we turn, we find wisdom built on death. God esteems physical life so slightly that he allows it to be squandered profusely in the purchase of wisdom, the completion of science, the rebuke of negligence and recklessness, and the acquisition of a circumspect and wary skill. One of the lessons which the human intellect is now set to learn is the wisest and safest method of navigating the ocean in a fog. There is a wise way of doing it, and a safe way ; it lies within the power of the human mind to master it, and to act according to it ; and we may be sure that no providence will arrest a single law that threatens our ignorance, or avert a single calamity that punishes our neglect. The comparative safety of the sea now is due to triumphs of the human mind, stimulated by danger and disaster. In future ages, doubtless, the safety will be perfect through the service of such catastrophes as we deplore to-day.

Brethren, it is a blessed thing to be lifted up above our own imperfect, partial vision to God's view of his universe. And the first thing for us to keep in mind, in our bewilderment before the mystery of death, is this : that God counts our physical life very cheap. Hundreds of millions of us he sweeps from the globe every century. Nothing seems more trifling, nothing of less consequence, in his regard than our mortal exist-

ence. The organization of the dust, the structure of the rocks, are more precious to him than our physical fabric of body and soul,—they endure while we perish. Physical life is the cheapest thing, because the real life is indestructible and invaluable. The Infinite Spirit sees no death, and he has prepared a broad realm of discipline, education, worship, and joy, in the light of which all momentary bereavements are nothing more than little dots of darkness. Here is the value of the great doctrine of faith. It is taking a higher hand,—it is lifting ourselves above mortal limitations to catch the lighted sweep of vision that spreads out before a perfect mind. What privilege like this can be offered to human nature? What other boon can be offered to it here that will give it such triumph—easy, joyous triumph—over the ills of life? If I had been on that steamer, I do not know that I should not have been timid, terrified, smitten to the heart with doubt and cowardly dismay; but if the principles that come to me in my best hours could have been there with me, I am sure that I should have had inward calmness. There might have been some instinctive physical recoil from the mode of death and the mystery of dissolution; but I could have had no doubt as to God and his infinite goodness, and the immense personal gain of sinking away from all the beauty and love and fellowships of this world into the deeper ocean of his mercy, the glorious spaces of his spiritual day.

We do not think enough of God ; that is our infirmity, that is the bitterness of our distress. In such times as these, in all times of perplexity and sorrow, turn away from the earth and look up. Think of the Infinite Wisdom ; think of the Infinite Care ; think of the Infinite Love. God hears our sighs and counts our tears. If we could see his methods and fathom his plans, we should rejoice in disaster ; we should rejoice in everything but sin, which is a turning away from him. Believe in immortality. Strive for more of that faith of Christ which sees that God is not a God of the dead, but of the living, since all live under him. Then shall we have the repose and peace of Christ. Then the suddenness of death darkening our homes will not break our trust, for we shall think of the light into which the departed rise. Then accidents shall not break our confidence. Then

“ Though the earth’s foundations shake,
And all the wheels of nature break,
Our steadfast souls shall fear no more
Than solid rocks when billows roar.”

X.

DISTRIBUTION OF SORROWS.

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." — *Hebrews* xii. 6.

WE often speak of the mystery or the problem of suffering as connected with religion. But the problem is not one simple question or difficulty. It has two parts. The first relates to the ordinance or permission of suffering ; the second relates to the apportionment or distribution of it.

A great many persons are more prominently interested in the first inquiry. They ask the question in the general form, — Why was sorrow ordained ? why was not everything made pleasant for the human race ? why has death been allowed ? whence the possibility of pain ? how can the long and frightful retinue of diseases be reconciled with a benevolent government of the world ? why are the hostilities of society permitted ? why was not life ordained to be an unruffled and delightful experience, guarded by genial forces, and compacted into joy ?

Now, this general question is not so very diffi-

cult to answer. We can gather, by thought, a broad stream of life to offset the general mass of shadow. Against the formula of suffering we can put a theory of life which, in a general way, will account for and justify the suffering. We can say that the world was made for the development of human nature, intellectually, morally, and spiritually, — in reason, will, and the richest affections. We may say that the highest attributes possible to a finite nature cannot be directly created, but must be gained, wrought out, developed by strain and struggle. We may say that all forms of hardship which can have a noble effect on the mind and the character are justified by the appearance of the product wrought out through them.

It would seem to be a great hardship to a lump of iron ore, if it were conscious, that it should have to be melted, separated from its accretions, beaten together into a lump or bar of pure metal, then heated again and cooled suddenly, — exposed in this way in quick succession to the most rapid and intense changes of temperature, and hammered furiously while these terrible processes are going on. "Why cannot I be left in peace," it might say, "in my condition as ore? I am contented with that form of life." Yet it is only by such processes that it can be promoted in quality from the sluggish state of raw metal, compounded with alloy, to steel. And if it could be conscious, after it became steel, it would say: "Now I see the reason for these mines, with pickaxes, and transportations,

and great furnaces, and blasts of air to heat the coals white, and those baptisms of cold, those solid anvils, and frightful hammers. They were all beneficent. The frost and fire, the beatings and pain, are represented in the hardness and the edge, the gleam and the capacity, of my nature now. This nature I shall keep as long as I exist, and those hardships were only the processes of ascension into a condition infinitely superior to what, in the nature of things, I could have known in an undisturbed and contented lot."

And this analogy, we say, can be used in the moral region. Finite natures can be created, we may say, only as ore; to be promoted they must have difficulties. Hardships which they would never choose must be inflicted on them, or made necessary, as a portion of discipline. The great thing in education we may affirm is not to have so many facts told to a person and brought to his knowledge, but to get mental power; and therefore truth is made difficult of access, though attainable by intellectual toil. Energy, courage, persistence, valor of will, are better than the most luxurious enjoyment that can be showered upon a being; and these can be brought out only by conflict of some kind, as a muscle becomes tough and potent only by lifting, wrenching, blows, and toil. And therefore we are put under the lash of hunger, thirst, and cold. To be befriended by Nature in all things would make a finite spirit immeasurably less noble than to gain

control of Nature ; and so we are set amid forces that are rude and rebellious, that we may gain the glory which comes from breaking and bridling them. Faith, and trust, and the pledging of ourselves to the Infinite will and love, are qualities that cannot be created in us by the Almighty as natural forces of our inward constitution ; they are the results of spiritual powers set in opposition to hardship, perplexity, sorrow, and the sight of things seeming to drift wrong in the world of circumstances for a season. If they are worth anything as qualities, they imply the necessity of such conditions, just as the rainbow implies the background of cloud and shower. Physical pain, too, we may say, is an indispensable possibility if spirit is to be put to discipline in connection with matter ; and if a free spirit, or a soul to be educated to freedom, and to be educated, also, as part of a great social organism, is put in connection with matter, the manifold forms of pain and disease cannot be directly prevented by the Almighty without breaking up the whole structure of education and discipline. And as to the intrusion of death into the world, we may say that, in the broad view of it, it is a sign of beneficence more than malignity, for it is the condition of life to myriads. If generations did not pass from the earth, it would soon be crowded, and the new tides of conscious life could not roll in to take its possibilities of training and enjoyment.

Such is the general theory which can be set

over against the general impeachment of order and providence, based on the existence of hardship and trial. I do not pretend to say that, at all points, it is intellectually satisfactory. I do not pretend to say that I could support it logically along its whole outline. I do not believe that there is an intellect on the globe competent to do that. There can be hardly anything more repulsive in the intellectual region than the claim of ability to solve perfectly the mystery of the appearance and permission of hardships and suffering. But I believe it may be fairly said that the theory we have stated accounts for as many or even more facts than does the theory which impeaches Providence. And if we can be made to broaden our view beyond the limits of this half-physical life, and take an unending existence into the account, we shall find more and more light thrown upon sorrow by the theory that the world is made to develop great qualities of the intellectual and spiritual order, and that all troubles and sufferings are accounted for and vindicated which have visibly been the means and the condition of producing mental power, and moral or spiritual force, which ennoble forever the spirit in whom they are evoked. We can then intelligently say, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."

We come to the more difficult question when we begin to ask about the distribution of suffering. A great many people may say, We are quite

ready to grant the cogency of such a theory of the uses of hardship, when set against a theory that wonders why the world is not an Eden, and why all the good that we can dream of does not ripen for us, and come to us almost without bidding. If people were treated essentially alike, they will say, we should be content with the answer, we should say that it throws an inspiring light on life and its relations to the future.

But, they urge, people are not treated alike. The moment we turn from the formula of suffering to the facts of suffering, the moment we turn our eyes from the theory of the Divine beneficence in the permission of hardship to the manner in which hardships are apportioned in this world, we find a problem unspeakably complicated. The mystery grows darker. The theory serves to throw a heavier shadow, of itself, when taken in connection with the real life of men and women on the globe. If this world is for the training of character by hardship, if hardship is essential for its production, if the Creator estimates qualities which can only be obtained by resistance and struggle as the very highest ends of his providence, why are burdens so unequally apportioned? Why are some thrown from birth into conditions that bring comparatively very little trial? Why are the noble faculties of others so oppressed by the weight heaped upon them that they have scarcely a possibility of developing even a feeble vitality? Why are some ordained

to breathe an atmosphere of pollution from their infancy? Why are whole races placed in circumstances a thousand times more favorable to the growth of admirable character than other races enjoy? When we come to particulars, it may be said, when you take the various strata and circles and varieties of individual lot within such a city as this into account, it does not seem as though human life can be set under any one theory that takes up and accounts for the problem of suffering and evil in the light of a wise Providence, certainly not in the light of the theory which makes these sorrows an intelligent scheme for the development of spiritual good.

And I at once confess that, in my view, many of the aspects of life, under this head of the problem, are insoluble. I do not believe that the theory has ever been thought out, or that the intellect has ever lived, which has thrown out or could give an explanation of the apportionment of sufferings that can stand the cross-questioning of an honest and thoughtful mind, determined to sift the question thoroughly. No man and no theory can satisfactorily tell us why an impartial God permits nations, ages of the world, whole districts of cities, different families of a near neighborhood, to be separated so widely by the amount they experience of the privileges of life; why a holy God allows thousands and millions to grow up in an air that must be fatal to purity; why a just God can see myriads born and reared

under the shadow of the most terrible injustice, from which other myriads are free ; why a sympathetic God can look with equanimity upon the pangs, the wretchedness, and the woe that, from no personal fault, sting and crush millions and tens of millions of natures here, and that would seem to make the music of the earth, as it rolls in its orbit, one vast inarticulate murmur of anguish. The man must be shallow in mind or cold in heart, he must be sadly deficient in humility or in sensibility, who will maintain that the actual apportionment of suffering can be as easily explained as the theoretical value and beneficence of suffering, if it were equally distributed, can be justified.

I do not mean by this, either, that we are driven to scepticism by the phenomena of the moral world. A sceptical theory of no Providence, or of a God that is capricious or indifferent to human welfare, finds as many facts, certainly, opposed to it, as the more cheering scheme has to meet. What I affirm is that no theory sets all the facts in order. Faith must be an act of confidence, not a demonstration. It must be the choice of one side over another, where neither side can make a clear case to the understanding. Faith must be the acceptance of the nobler side, and the grounding of the life upon it, just as practical unbelief and the refusal of worship must be the choice of the darker side, and the grounding of life upon that.

But although no intellect is competent to construct a theory which will fully explain the unequal distribution of hardship and suffering, there are one or two things to be said which, I think, do throw light upon some portions of that problem. It is by taking a longer time into account, by making the conception of eternity a vital element in the question, by putting this life and a future life into as close connection as a course of training in a university and the career in active pursuit that is to follow, that we obtain our clearest light upon the purpose of hardship when the general problem is before the mind for treatment.

Now, when the question is stated to me, or proposes itself to my own thought, thus : Here is a person who has no hardships of lot to encounter, no difficulties to wrestle with — everything in life goes as smoothly as floating down stream — how do you bring such an experience into harmony, under the same system, with the lot of another person or family, upon whom troubles are poured like hail, whose sky has more thunder in it than light and cheer, to whom the revelation of God is indeed in the picture of the Psalm, "Clouds and darkness are round about thee"? — I say in answer, this : The crisis-season probably, in the history of the person with the easy lot, has not come. But, it may be said, it does not come even up to the hour of death. Then, I answer, it will come in the future life. I believe that, as to the

experience of hardship in relation to the consecration of the will, there is to be no possible escape by any finite and free creature of God.

If the broad principle be true that we were made for the awakening and training of the noblest affections, and for the dedication of the will, we must all be involved in clouds enough, be pressed by burdens heavy enough, be submitted to severities of condition enough, to furnish the will with the opportunity of making a controlling choice of something higher than it clearly sees, and of conjoining itself deliberately to God ; thus receiving his life into the central artery of our spiritual nature. Jesus did this in Gethsemane. The cup seemed very bitter ; the cloud passed over the face of Infinite Love. His heart was rent. He said, Let this experience be kept from me, — “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” He acknowledged the Highest Law then. He was made perfect, his will was perfectly united with the Divine through suffering. He was then a perfectly free being in the universe, completely united with the Infinite Love, — the Perfect Son.

And thus the saying is true, “He scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” Not for the sake of the scourging, not by arbitrary determination, but because the finite spirit cannot flower out into its richest capacity, its consummate excellence, its possibility of noble, sweet, perpetual joy, until, under the pressure of some sort of calamity or

hardship, it makes the conscious homage to an Infinite excellence, and submits itself to the disposal of a Sovereign mind and mercy.

Some persons do this in the experience of many of the countless forms in which trial visits us in this world. Loss of property is the condition in which not a few find it. Desertion by friends is the shock that drives others to it. Sickness is the seclusion in which still others wake to a sense of their relation to the source of life. An experience of the evil hidden in one's nature is the spur that incites another class. Contemplation of the woes that afflict the race as a whole shows to others their need of faith in an Infinite justice and compassion on whose purposes their hearts can lean. The loss of kindred and friends is the condition of its attainment by thousands more. But all these fail, with multitudes, to induce such consecration. They are postponing the acquisition of the purpose of their creation. And where persons do not experience any of these or similar hardships, their trials are simply reserved for a future stage of their existence. It may be that they will not come in such forms as they assume in this world ; but the only theory which throws any noble meaning on this world bids us believe that they are yet to come in some form powerful enough to waken the whole nature, and lift it by a decisive choice into a dedicated state.

There is this difference between mental and moral training or education. The first consists in

gaining knowledge ; the second in attaining a certain state of will. Power is the all-essential object in the first case ; submission and allegiance in the other, — allegiance that flows from choice, and the comprehensive feeling that there is no other life which is worthy or desirable, and no other method of attaching our nature to the currents of the Infinite life. A person with a soul who fails to be plunged into perplexities and hardships enough to press the will heavily and give it no peace till it rises into this highest state misses the object of his creation, just as much as a mind would that should not be aroused from a listless and happy ignorance to be strained and buffeted in the exercise of pursuing truth. And if the circumstances of this life have been too easy to admit such dramatic antagonism between a life self-centred and a life centred in God, and drawn from him, it is a proof that the Sovereign grace has postponed the crisis-trial of the life thus made so easy here to the future existence.

The Church has hindered men from taking such a view by its doctrine that this life is a final state of probation, or that only punishment or reward follows men into the future. Such a hacking at the laws which bind our whole life into spiritual unity is fatal to any broad and impressive conception of its purpose, and of the relation to each other of the two states. We must come to believe that countless spirits go into the next life to meet trials and burdens which are not punish-

ment or doom, but discipline, education, the preparation for life. We must set that world, not in a sentimental and rosy light, as many Universalists do,—not in a lurid, frightful light, as Calvinists do,—not separating it into two latitudes, within one of which all is misery, and within the other perfected and rather formal, if not tedious, bliss,—but in the light of the fact that the vast majority of people go from this world into it with unkindled spiritual powers, which are to be wakened there by the only means competent to fit a free nature to become a channel for the Infinite life. When a soul says, “Thy will be done,” and says it from the core of its being, its spiritual education is completed; it passes up then into joy. Until it says this it is not born into the kingdom of God, and its great capacities of enjoyment are not opened. Until it has experienced trials enough to make it feel the boundless importance of saying this, the goodness of God has not been perfectly manifest towards it, and is waiting to reveal itself in the world to come.

This view, brethren, not only puts this life in more vital and rational and beneficent connection with the next, but it teaches us how to regard those who are set in opposite conditions of fortune in this world. I believe that essentially equal spiritual trials are to be appointed, in the long run, to all souls. For those who are born under the very dominion of evil here, with organ-

izations that determine to vice, and whose circumstances are infinitely less favorable than some of us are circled with, I cannot but believe that there is to be compensation in the world to come, so that they shall not be able, in comparison with any of us, to impeach the Infinite equity. But when we see a soul loaded with sorrow, bowed by poverty, chained to a sick-room, flooded by disasters, robbed of friends, torn by disappointments, tossed on a sea of afflictions that do not, of necessity, utterly overwhelm it, we may say here is a spirit, whom God is now carrying through the test-season of its education. And if the spirit is not crushed by all that rolls against it, if it shows fortitude in adversity, patience in scourging, serenity in sickness, trust in bereavement, if it says, "I know that God must be good in all this ; I cannot see his purpose, but I do not doubt its beneficence ; ' Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him ; ' his will be done," we may say here is a triumphant life ; here is the great work accomplished for which a soul is fashioned and made heir to an eternal life ; here is a spiritual state attained which opens the whole infinite to its possession and makes the universe a home ; here is the ore of nature tempered into the Christian steel. And when such a one dies, the chimes sound in the unseen world in welcome of a soul for whom eternity has nothing but infinite beauty, opportunities of noble service, the joy of receiving and imparting the spirit of God.

And shall we not, especially, be led to look at our own experience in the light of this principle? If any of us are tempted, or are accustomed to consider our own hardships greater, and mysteriously greater, than those of others whom we know, if we think that their lot would be far preferable to ours, let us be assured that trial is the necessary spiritual condition of a dedicated will, and that whatever earthly lot we might take in exchange for our own, we must, in the future of our being, take some form of hardship that will make consecration essential for our relief, and that will set our consecration in intense light upon its background before the moral universe. If we should half dream away our mortal years in an Arcadia on this earth, we could not slip this law.

Whatever our trial be, therefore, — poverty, sickness, hostile social circumstances, misappreciation by others, loss of friends, the approach of death, — let us ask ourselves, how it would seem, what different aspect it would wear, what uses it might serve, how much easier it might be borne, if we were conscious of being nearer to God, if we had faith in Providence, if we felt the presence of a filial spirit that nothing could break? This question will reveal to us the Divine estimate of what seems at first our hard condition. And if we see and feel that our lot would be immeasurably different if we had such faith, and a will in harmony with God's, then we see the Divine conditions under which our spiritual

life is to be wrought into strength. For we may be sure that if we refuse our faith and allegiance now, we must make them in the future under no easier terms. God does not lower the laws to suit our deliberate weakness.

And let us remember, too, that until we make that consecration, that act of faith, all life will be a trial ; there will be no perennial happiness distilled for us ; we cannot know inwardly the love of God, because we will not graft our life upon it ; we cannot be conscious of the liberty of sonship.

1859.

XI.

DELIVERANCE FROM THE FEAR OF DEATH.

"And deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." — *Hebrews xi. 15.*

THE passage in the letter to the Hebrews with which the verse just read is connected declares that a prominent purpose of the ministry of Christ was to deliver men from the bondage which the dread of death, and of all that is associated with death, produces. It implies, therefore, that a deep and wise religious culture shows its crowning blessedness and power by breaking that fear in the soul; by lifting the whole nature above it; by inspiring the mind and heart to exclaim, as the highest passage in its chant of triumph over the world, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

I am sure that if we should all of us look into our own natures fairly, or consult our own experience, we should say that the greatest spiritual blessing that could be bestowed upon us would be such a set of principles or such a tone of feeling as would deliver us completely, now and to the

end of our days, from all bondage of mind and of sentiment to the power of death. When we set the problem of death before the mind in its breadth, solemnity, and gloom, as it has engaged the thought and the fears of the wisest of our race in every nation and century ; when we think how men have recoiled from it as the end of all that is pleasant in their knowledge of the beauty and wonder of nature, the end visibly of the light, the cheer, the music of this palpable world, the end of human fellowship, and the ministries of human love ; when we think of it as the vast black curtain dropped from the heavens across the track of every living being, and closing up the vista against all the strainings and importunity of sense ; when we think how many myriads have passed to the other side of it, and yet that we hear no chorus from them that they still live and love and worship there, that no waves of influence come to us so demonstrably as to break our scepticism while we are at our toil, while we are amid perplexities that would be cleared away if we could have messages unmistakable and inspiring from that misty sphere ; when we think of the terrors and quakings with which human breasts have been shaken by the haunting suspicion of the woes that may await them after they shall have passed beyond that drop-scene, and consider to how many millions the assurance that there is no future life would be unspeakably welcome, as a relief from the tortures of their education or the forebodings

of their guilt, — must we not be convinced that the view which a man has of death, and of all related to it, is the exhibition and efflorescence of all his religious faith and principles? Must we not see that the man who can face that question calmly, the man who can say from the level of his religious character, "I am not afraid to die; I am not afraid of anything that lurks behind that solemn screen; I detect the strugglings through it of an intenser light than is around us here; I believe that everything which makes this world a privilege is offered still more largely to my essential nature when I pass into the region which the grave hides; I feel no shadow and no dread cast upon my work, darkening my home, or creeping into my heart, at the thought of death, because I believe that God has a still higher good in store for me, and mine, and all humanity, in the sphere beyond the grave,"—must we not acknowledge that such a man has attained the highest victory in thought and feeling which Christian faith can give, that his calmness, his trust, his deliverance from all the bondage which the certainty and the problem of death have ever wrought upon humanity, are the clear and sufficient tests that the very noblest elements of Christian faith have ripened in his nature? Has he not fulfilled in his experience the promise of Christ, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life"?

But now let us attend more particularly, and in order, to the bondage we suffer from the fear of death, and to the sources of deliverance from it.

With a great many persons a prominent element of this thralldom is the fear of dying. A large number of persons, faithful persons, persons who are in a state of heart which frees them from much of the spiritual fear of death, suffer greatly from constitutional recoil at what may be the pain, or the mental terrors, or the anguish of the most sacred affections, in the dissolution of the spirit from the body, and the separation from those we love and must leave.

Now, in the region of the highest truth there is provision by Infinite goodness against every constituent element of the fear of death ; and certainly God calls us to see now, through abundant testimony of experience and of science, that this form of dread is gratuitous, and that it rests on delusion. Those that are well suffer vastly more from the thought of dying than the sick do from the experience of it. When the time comes there is not much dread of yielding the bodily life. It is natural to die, as it is natural to yield up our consciousness for rest and refreshment. It is probable that the proportion of those who suffer in the late stages of disease from the fear of breathing out their mortal vitality is far less than the number of those who suffer through nervousness from the inability to sink pleasantly into nightly sleep.

There is scarcely any department of human experience to which scientific scrutiny has been directed during the last century, which has yielded such novel and striking illustrations of the beneficence of God, as the distribution and the economy of pain. It reveals his truth, it reveals his justice, it publishes the severity of his laws, and the vast value he sets upon the living in accordance with his statutes, physical as well as moral ; but it publishes, also, his beneficence. For the great principle has been established, that, when pain can no longer serve as a guard, a monitor, and a warning, it is taken away. And in accordance with the principle we find that the dread of dying melts, when it can no longer serve as a protection to our life, when the vital power is hopelessly smitten. A distinguished physician and physiologist of England has recently borne testimony that, in the range of his large experience, he has known but two cases where there was manifest dread of dying in the experience of dissolution itself ; and these were persons who had no long experience of sickness, but were snatched away quite suddenly by the effects of accident, when in full health.

I am quite sure that the testimony of clergymen will point in the same direction. It is very rarely, I am convinced, that the will does not yield, when it becomes a settled certainty that the bodily life must ebb away, even though in the earlier stages of disease there may have been

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anxious, painful, or rebellious recoil from the thought of death. And then clergymen can bear abundant testimony to the strange fact that the affections, also, are calm in the last hours. Even when they are most refined, and are complicated widely and delicately with earthly love, it is very strange how serenely they unclasp from their objects, with what sweetness and resignation they learn to say "farewell," and how, when all around the bedside are penetrated with the grief that wrings from the very soul the bitterest tears, they can give up all that has been most delightful in earthly companionship with unmoistened eyes and with faltering tones of courage and consolation.

The pain of dying, too, has been exaggerated. By the testimony of the wisest physicians there is no place in human language for that phrase, "the last mortal agony." The vast majority of the children of God breathe out their life with entire unconsciousness of suffering. The angel of death hovers over the mortal couch as a friend; and in almost every death-chamber the words of David may be read as an interpretation of the last experience which the spirit has of its partnership with flesh, — "He giveth his beloved sleep."

O earth, so full of dreary noises !
O men, with wailing in your voices !
O delv'd gold, the wailers heap !
O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall !
God makes a silence through you all,
And "giveth his beloved sleep."

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We may say, as a general truth, therefore, that we are disturbed by illusions, if we are in bondage from the fear of dying as a physical experience, or from dread of the distresses which the finer sensibilities and affections may suffer in the last hours or days. There is so little of such distress, so unfrequently any expression of recoil from the fact of dying, or of unwillingness to die, when the time draws near, such a general acquiescence in the call to pass away from the outward life, to give up property, to leave home and friends, to leave behind all the strifes of the market and the street, to say, "I am ready now to rest and to await what God may have in store," that it is impossible to tell, from the experience of the last hours, how deep the consecration of the soul has been, or what is its inmost religious state. We are delivered in a great measure, then, from fear by natural laws expressing the goodness of God that play within the constitution of our being.

The real deliverance from the bondage of death, the only one which will test the religiousness of our thought and the consecration of our will, must be wrought out while we are in health. It lies in the thorough comprehension by the mind of all the doubts and all the terrors that can be associated with death, and the dispersion of them by principles which the mind holds with a conviction which grows with its growth and strengthens with its strength.

And in this connection we must speak first of the dread of death as the cessation of our being. The religious sentiment and the Christian meet this fear by the principle that our life does not and cannot cease here ; that this existence is but the threshold of our experience. But in order to conquer death in our imagination and our feeling we must take this principle into the very substance of our thought and of our nature. The senses are the great enemy of the doctrine of immortality. It is only by serious discipline that we can conquer their opposition to it, and make it a central and illuminating, a controlling principle in our life. We must train ourselves to feel that the soul is really the substantial thing ; that the body exists for the soul, and not the soul for the frame. We must rise into the custom of perceiving that, by the testimony of our own consciousness, the moral forces within us are the deepest and commanding ones. We must bring ourselves up to a steady perception of the fact that all experience which tests, which educates, and which increases moral and spiritual forces in us, is the most valuable experience which men ever get ; so that none of us would think of denying that poverty and hardship and pain had proved noble blessings for a man if they made him more virtuous, more reverent, purer in heart, and stronger in will. We must protect ourselves against estimating the importance and the worth of life by anything outward, anything like sensuous enjoyment, repu-

tation, worldly place or scale of living, and must make our standard of it moral and inward, the exercise of religious loyalty, charity, acquaintance with God through all the publications of His life and by all our faculties, and then we shall be in the condition to know how immortality can seem the natural truth in relation to our spirits, and how this existence can be and is only the scaffolding for building up the outer walls of our nature.

We cannot get such a belief in immortality as will deliver us from the bondage of death until we can see that the next life, if it be true at all, according to the Christian interpretation of it, must be in the proper sense more substantial than this; and more substantial because it will call into play more steadily those powers of our humanity which are the only substantial things in us here,—the mind, which takes up no room, and which may grow indefinitely without any increase of the bodily organization; the heart, which does not draw from any material source in growing more self-sacrificing and affectionate; the taste for pure beauty, which feeds itself year after year on the wonders and charms of God's works, and grows year after year by what it feeds on, and yet takes nothing from outward nature and gives no material sign of its own increase; and the religious sensibilities, which feel after God and commune with him, and imbibe the deepest joy from such communion, and yet are unseen and feed themselves from unseen springs.

Ah, my friends, so long as you believe that the body is the substantial side of your humanity because you have sensible experience of it, and that the solid world is the chief reality outside of you because it resists your touch and is lighted to your eye ; so long as you fail to perceive that intellect is an unspeakably higher and more real thing than your array of muscles, that the law of duty is of a higher grade of substance and value than your blood, that virtue and the power of knowing God are more essential portions of your personality than your arteries and your nerves, and are nobler than your intellect besides, and that, outside of you, the wisdom of God, the glory of God, the goodness and sustaining power of God, which alone give this world and the universe meaning and majesty and beauty to your mind, are unutterably higher and more real things than the layers of rock beneath you, and the deeps of air above, and that the Spirit of God is vaster and more substantial than all the height and compass of this creation, which was called into visible being by his breath, — you are not in the condition to feel yet the victorious faith in immortality! You are weighed down by matter, and must move along to the other and the spiritual pole of the scale of thought. When you once get there, and see that this world exists for what is best in you, and that everything lovely and grand in nature is the quickening and the food for something noble and moral in you, and that it is a spiritual consti-

tution which God has housed in your body, to be educated here, then you grasp the principle that dissipates death from your thoughts, and that lifts you into seeing that the next life, instead of being a pleasant fancy or an empty sphere of ghosts, may be more substantial than this, though invisible now, by appealing directly, without the medium of the body and without the interruption of bodily cares and needs, to our power of learning truth, to our capacity of enjoying Divine beauty, to our moral faculty and capability of excellence and power of service, to all the faculties through which we know God and by which we are his children. It is thus, brethren, that we must vitalize and inflame the idea of immortality into victory over our senses and their scepticism, and over the bondage of the fear that the death of the body is the quenching of our life.

And now I must speak of the bondage created by the fear of what may come after death. There are very few persons, comparatively, who take and keep a spiritual view of the universe and of human life, such as we have just unfolded, and thus gain an intelligent victory over death as the foe of their conscious being. But there are a great many who have a lurking and phantom faith in immortality, and are kept by it in dread, from fear of terrors which may hide there, and with which the laws of God are armed. This is the superstitious servitude in the fear of death. Unwholesome or unripe religion has fostered it for centu-

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ries. True Christianity tries to conquer this by inspiring us with confidence in the justice of the Almighty.

For one, brethren, I believe most seriously that death is a crisis in our spiritual history. I believe that it is an important and tremendous crisis. Unrobing the spirit of the flesh; lifting it out from connection with the world in which it may have taken ignoble and unholy pleasure; striking away from it the cushion of its sloth, the banquets of its transitory delight, the channels of its vice, the pleasant draperies with which it has curtained itself against the calls of duty; setting it face to face with the splendors of truth, for which its untrained eye is weak, before the blaze of holy realities, and within the grasp of laws whose majesty it has slighted, but which it sees now in all their severity and grandeur; unloosing it, a weak and faithless spirit, it may be, in a spiritual world the alphabet of whose language it refused, perhaps, to learn in the flesh,—I dare not tell you that I think this will be anything less than a mighty and tremendous crisis for you and for me. All easy and volatile raptures about passing from this world into the next, as though then all care is over and peace is sure, sound to me not only weak but repulsive.

And yet no emotion of fellowship can I ever feel with a faith that stimulates or allows any fear of Infinite justice in the world to come. Essentially that is blasphemy. Do not believe that any

force or quality of the Infinite Being can be your foe. Any scheme of religious thought which tells us that we have the opportunity here, through the partial goodness of God, to escape his justice in the world to come, though many of the best men on this earth have taught it and seemed to believe it, is a dreadful form of paganism. Our only hope here or anywhere is in the justice of God. In its severity, in its tenacity, in the terrors with which it faces your guilt, in the tones with which, through your conscience, it shakes your soul, it is still a form of the Infinite Love. When you are in sickness, do you dread the medicine that alone can search the hidings of your disease as though it were your foe? Do you recoil from the physician, and call him your enemy, because he will not talk smooth words to you, but tells you of your violation of the laws of your constitution, and warns you if you do not turn and obey them? O my friend, see that Infinite justice is your medicine! If your mind is dark by the absence of knowledge, and God brings his truth near to you, and keeps it there, and tries to educate you through mental toil and pain to welcome it and rejoice in it, will you call him your foe because he will not let you wrap yourself in your gloom and live away in your thought? See, now, I beseech you, that Infinite justice, besieging thus the moral side of our being, is for our moral education,—the constant possibility of it, the constant pledge that it will not be neglected!

The highest act of faith which the soul can utter is to say that it is not afraid of the justice of God, into whatever world it may be lifted. When a friend of mine is taken into the next life, I do not ask to know if he is at once perfectly happy, or how soon he may be so. I ask only to know if he has gone into the discipline of perfect justice. I would not be afraid to give up my dearest to that. Without Infinite justice I am sure that God cannot be perfectly good. And I know that in his perfect justice he cannot hate me. He is, and must be, hostile to the evil that is in me, because that keeps me from him and corrupts my spirit. To be forsaken of Infinite justice, so that God should not hold you under his law, or care for your improvement, would be the dreadful doom. And so, if I were about to pass into the next world, I should have no fear to pray that Infinite justice might search me, and put me to its sternest discipline, to break within me the power of evil that corrupts the affections and degrades the will.

Dread of the discipline that may come after death is dread of God, and that is indeed bondage. O you who have been called to yield your best beloved into the arms of that messenger that bears the spirit from the outer to the inner shrine of God's great temple, let no doubt that the Infinite Righteousness is friendly to his children, even when they are stained with evil, unsettle or becloud your trust! Whithersoever we go in God's limit-

less universe, his continual and blessed purpose with us is to raise us up to see his truth, enjoy his glory, serve and love his children, adore his excellence, and receive his life. Nothing but evil in our constitution can prevent us from advancing in such knowledge and such joy; and the justice of God is our best friend hereafter, if it prevents us by its discipline there from being content with evil, and if, through training and pain, it develops us to a ready and large reception of the Divine spirit and love.

Trust in God is the all-essential spirit to cultivate, in order to have a right estimate of death, and to be delivered from the bondage of its fear. God is the grand truth of this universe. God is the substratum of this universe. Light and darkness, the kingdom of life and the realm of death, are all embraced in the circle of his power and goodness. Live as close as you can to him, by listening to conscience, by a consecrated will, by giving your pure affections play, by doing good to others from a disposition of charity which you desire to deepen, and through all these ways seeking to make confidence in his rule and trust in his infinitude the controlling undermood of the heart; this is to conquer death by fastening the spirit to the very source of life. As soon as we can learn to feel that God is the foundation and support, the substance and sustenance, of our souls and all that is around our souls in this life, and that his laws are perfect and his love constant

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and wise now, we are armed against all fear of the grave or of a change of worlds. For then we shall feel that if God sees it is best for us to live hereafter and forever, he will bear us across the grave ; and we shall feel assured that God, who changes not, will be as wise, as patient, as just, and as merciful in the circumstances of eternity as in those of time.

The Infinite Spirit invites us all to this trust in him, to as much confidence in his justice as in his mercy, to trust in him who is equity and mercy and truth and beneficence equally, perfectly, and always. Christ would help us to conquer death, and all the ills which death brings to our homes and hearts, and all the doubts and distresses which the contemplation of death intrudes upon the soul, by inspiring this all-conquering and all-illuminating trust. Confidence in God as the perfect Ruler, Father, and Spirit of this universe is Christianity. By opening the possibility of this perception and reliance, Christ has conquered death for us, more than by his miracles, his resurrection, and his personal defeat of the grave. He gives us the sanctity and tenderness and sweetness of his spirit, his truthfulness and his love, as the complexion to throw upon the Infinite, so that we can say, Whoso hath seen Christ hath seen the Father. In the spirit of trust in God's government, in time and eternity, which we can all have by denying our passions, consecrating our will, and opening our souls to heaven, we can echo

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the saying of Paul : " All things are yours ; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

1857.

XII.

THE TWO HARVESTS.

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." — *Jeremiah* viii. 20.

THE text sets nature in solemn contrast with human life, — "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved," — suggesting to us for serious thought, not merely that a certain length of time has elapsed and we have been spiritually listless, not simply that an opportunity has gone by which we have not filled with duty, but that something beneficent and sacred has been going on in the outward world with which we have not been in harmony; that the elements have been doing their work while we have been misdoing ours; and that, measured against nature, at the close of one of its fruitful seasons, we seem out of order, discordant, away from God, unserviceable, and unprofitable: in a word, "we are not saved." Turn then to-day from contemplating your life and your character before the Biblical standard of purity and charity, and think of human life in contrast with the characteristics of nature's principles and productiveness. Think

how the human world must look under the eye of God, relieved against the loyalty and order of nature every year !

The harvest is past. Not a spear of wheat has grown, not a kernel of corn has hardened, not a beet has reddened in the ground, not an apple or a plum has nursed sweet juices through the tree out of the ground, that has not revealed or illustrated, in the process of its growth, a principle which ought to be carried out in nobler ways by human souls. Our dependence on God, our reception of his light and his spiritual rain, our fidelity to the duty of the circumstances in which we are set, our success in bending chilly days and gusts of adversity to usefulness in strengthening character, ought to fulfil the lessons which every vine and every tree publish in their use of sunshine and soil and dew and storm.

And the bounty of the harvest is for this purpose. Think what that bounty has been in this country this year ! If we could gather into one mass all the grains, the fruits, and the vegetables, all that the earth has yielded and that man may partake of, within the borders of our own nation during the last six months, they would fill a storehouse, as high and as wide as an ordinary country barn, that would stretch from the easternmost coast of our country, beyond the Mississippi, beyond the Rocky Mountains, to the Pacific shore of Oregon. If the whole bounty of Providence during the creative season of the year

should be massed thus by the Almighty, and our people should be obliged to go, person by person or family by family, to such a monstrous bin to receive their share of the land's exuberance, how poetic and how impressive would the munificence of God through the harvest seem, how vividly would our dependence be revealed to us, how unnatural would the taking of the heavenly gifts without gratitude appear! And if now we take the fruit of the earth, which is only the varied expression of the punctuality of Providence in the weaving of the seasons and the alternations of sunshine and shower, and if we renew our strength from it day after day with no reverence in our thought and no thankfulness in our heart to the unsparing and unwearied Giver, then the truth of the text is directly revealed in our state; the harvest stands as the background to show off the truth that "we are not saved," — that we are out of harmony, through the coldness of our sentiment, with the boundless beneficence, — since, while every loaded ear of grain bends as if in adoration of creative liberality, we, for whom it was designed and nourished by the Infinite, receive from it no motive to reverent thanksgiving, no impulse to joyous prayer!

The earth is for man, the bounties of earth are for man; and the success of every harvest, judged from the spiritual world, is tried by this test, — how much spiritual fruit does it mature? how many noble human qualities blossom out of

the life and the strength which the earth's bounty supplies? into how much that is infinitely higher than nature does the harvest get transformed by being lifted up into man?

O brethren, how ought we to be saddened, how ought we to be humbled, how ought the law and call of the Gospel to glow before us in the colors of a fresh solemnity, when we think of the difference which God sees when he turns from the natural world to a survey of the human world! In nature all is order. There is no sinful planet; there is no selfish or miserly sun; there is no galaxy of wicked or discordant stars; the winds are not rebellious; the sea does not refuse service; the clouds do not loiter on their errands; the hills are not penurious; the ground does not bar its bosom against the influence of sunbeams and rains. God's law, God's holiness, God's charity, are reflected in the loyalty and the purity and the fraternity visible in all the facts and forces of the outward world.

But when the Divine eye turns from the house to the tenants, what discord, what folly, what rebellion! Suppose that the human race should be turned by miracle into portions of the natural world,—should be transformed into a part of the vegetable domain, and should express there the same qualities that they exhibit now in human ways, the same passions, the same bitterness, the same impurity, the same selfishness, the same hatred, instead of the beauty and bounty that

now adorn and load the valleys and the hills, what a scanty, shrivelled, sour, and ugly harvest would appear !

Suppose that you, my friend, if you are leading a life unregulated and alien from God, should be turned, just as you are, into a tree, and should act, as a tree, precisely as you now act as a man. Your disobedience of spiritual laws would be shown in the refusal of the tree to throw out its roots to be rightly balanced in nature. Your lack of spiritual growth would be exhibited in the neglect of the tree to widen its rings, and stretch its bark, and rear its trunk, and push out its boughs every year, in order to reach its intended stature. The poverty of your spiritual sensibilities would appear in wan and shrivelled leaves ; your denial of heavenly grace in the opposition of the tree to quickening sunshine, and its resistance to mellowing rains ; the wrong thoughts you cherish, in foul insect-webs and broods that would net the branches with their vile and deadening threads ; your lack of service, in the refusal of the tree to bear any fruit, although it was the intention of God that it should glorify his providence in branches laden with sweet benefactions to the race ; your vices, in the rust, the mould, or the canker on the bark, telling of corrupt juices within.

How many men there are who would recoil from themselves if they could see themselves thus translated down into some portion of nature's

lower domain, — could see what shrivelled wheat, what musty corn, what blighted grapes, what frost-bitten and bitter plums, would be yielded every year if nature was not better, in its order, than they are on their plane? O, if a miser could only see what a poor, gnarled, pinched crab-apple tree he would turn into, if his spirit should sink to a lower order of creation and take the same rank he has now; or if the fretful and morose man could look at the prickly pear that is his equivalent; or if the man of depraved principles could have a fair view of the deadly nightshade or blistering upas he would turn into in such a metamorphosis, — no more stirring or burning sermon could be preached than to force a man to look thus into a symbolic mirror of himself.

Do you not see, my brethren, how pure, how loyal, how serviceable, you must be in order to be on the level of nature? We are called superior to nature, and yet the autumn fruitfulness, the peace of the outward world, condemn us. There is not one man in fifty thousand, the globe over, that is as true in his sphere as every stalk of corn is that goes into an autumn sheaf. There is not one man in a million, take Christendom through, that is noble enough to have his life, in its quality and its fruitfulness, represented by the history of an average peach-tree. Every closing summer, every completed harvest, preaches to us that we are not saved by showing us we are not up to the suggestions of the sphere we live in;

that, as a race, we are less than natural ; and that God sees more of himself reflected in the harmonies of creation than in the fidelity and the fruitfulness of the souls made in his likeness.

The Church is the vineyard in which we are to be nurtured, if possible, to be natural. If we were, as a people, up to the level of the life suggested by the harvest just gathered, what fraternity would be organized into our society ; what genial and constant service ; what far-running, complicated, and interlocked unity of life ; what absence of infamy, what virtue, what joy ! It will take ages of experience, disaster, suffering, and woe before the grace of God shall find human minds wise enough, human hearts tender enough, human wills submissive enough, to band themselves into a society that shall give the Infinite Father as much joy as the spectacle of the harvest gives to the Infinite Creator ; before that old prophecy can be realized, foretelling the time when man shall be loyal as nature, — “As the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater : so shall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth ; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

The wealth of the harvest, you know, is, in large measure, from the seed scattered or planted

in the spring. And see how, in this aspect of it, the faithfulness of nature supplies a serious background to set off the poverty, the unsaved and unsafe condition, of human life. What a terrible calamity it would be to society if the readiness of the earth to receive and welcome the seeds dropped into her bosom, and protected by human watchfulness, should be broken! What a dreadful judgment upon us all, if the soil should have the power and the tendency to cast them out from its furrows, to refuse them shelter and nutriment, and, instead, to take down into its mellowed substance the germs of briers and weeds!

And yet, would such a change in the disposition and forces of the soil do anything more than bring nature, which we live in, into accord with the tendencies and habits of our inward life? God is showering seed upon your soul continually. He does not leave you a day without sending a quickening lesson or a noble thought or a conviction of sinfulness or a pure motive into your soul. Think of the last year as a whole, and how many blessed appeals and influences have reached you, — how many sacred solicitations to live more reverently than you have lived, how many serious pleadings to give up a wrong indulgence, how many warnings against the bondage of a bad habit, how many stings of the sensibilities for your moral weakness, how many thrilling invitations to live more usefully, how many sweet calls to mount up to a higher plane

of feeling and action, where you would find more cheer and more peace! How thickly has God strewn mercies over your spirit the past year! How has he invited you, in seasons of silence and in presence of nature, to recognize him, ever so near to you; to adore him, so patient and faithful in belting you with his power and laws; to rely on him, upon whom all nature leans! How has he sprinkled holy words of Jesus upon your ear, that hold the central truths of this universe, and that are saturated with the very essence of his love! How has he shaken the rich leaves of the Bible over your nature, loosening from them instructions that are for the healing of nations! How has he scattered the privileges of Sunday and the Church over your hearts,—hymns and sacred song and prayers and instructions, to whose permanent central verity your souls have often said Amen! And now and then God has disturbed your nature with trial, or broken it with adversity, or he has ploughed it deep and powdered it with sorrow, and then with the drill of heaven he has sunk some truth of the celestial order, essential to your enduring welfare, into your being. Ye are thus God's husbandry. And what result? Each of these whispers, lessons, messages, was sent as a seed to reappear in your character, as the grain of wheat or the kernel of corn pours upward a living bounty sixty-fold. But what proportion of them have taken hold of your hearts? How many of them have

not perished there? How few of them that have not been ejected from our bosoms, spurned from the hostile substance of our souls, when we have found what consecration, what vigilance, what noble toil, were demanded to make them rooted and fruitful forces of our life? The Infinite Spirit looks at the outward harvest, and the luscious music of the Psalmist's eloquence exhales from it: "The little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing." He looks from this bounty to the wide landscape of humanity, and what is there to respond as the antistrophe to that chant of nature, but the words, "I went by the field of the slothful, . . . and lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down." It is the inversion of prophecy that we exhibit: we harbor and nurture in our nature what is pleasant to the selfish mind for the moment; and so, despite the Divine planting, the thorn comes up instead of the fir-tree, and the brier instead of the myrtle-tree, and the desolation stands before heaven as a sign that, while "the harvest is past and the summer is ended," past and ended in bounty and peace, "we are not saved."

There is a traditional doctrine in the Christian Church that the earth was blasted in the very dawn of history for human sin. I beg you, in justice to

the bountiful world, to see how false this is. It is better than we. Notwithstanding the care and the toil and the skill that must be expended to evoke a harvest, the earth is unspeakably more tractable, more obedient, more pure, more charitable, than we are. It is a glorious exhibition of the grace of God that he saves us from living here in a world that corresponds to ourselves, that is far nobler than we. Swedenborg tells us that in the next world our surroundings, our whole visible scenery, will be the reflection or the emanation of our interior personal state. Men try to do that in this world. By war, by sloth, by misrule, by vice, by slavery, men try to ravage and desecrate and starve the earth to respond to their ignorance, folly, hatred, and sin ; but the earth is too divine to wear the image steadily, and it breaks out in new beauty, it bursts with fresh bounty, it honors anew the heavenly laws, as if to preach a perpetual sermon to our race, enforcing the appeal of Him who drew a lesson from agriculture for his Gospel, and winning us to harmony with the infinite laws.

Another truth which the contemplation of nature in contrast with humanity suggests, and especially of the harvest in comparison with human fruitfulness in virtue, is the openness of the external world to the inflowing of as much of the Divine life as it can hold. Here we touch the deepest lesson which our subject can yield. All goodness comes from reception of the Divine Spirit.

All increase of goodness comes from enlarging or multiplying the channels for the reception and absorption of the Divine life. All evil is from the shutting out of God, or the perversion of his bounty and vitality by disease or sin, in the forms which he has fashioned to receive it. We are nothing of ourselves. "Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." "Our sufficiency is of God."

Now nature is always open to God. His laws find free course and are glorified up through all space, from our tiny planet to the outer edge of the milky way. Soften the soil, watch a seed, prune and graft a tree, and the blessed grace of sunshine and moisture will flow out through fresh and finer channels, and publish themselves in more lovely and savory fruit. The harvest is the beneficent transmutation of God's quickening vitality through vegetable veins into palpable sustenance for the children of men, the annual proof that there is no sin in the arteries of nature.

But we are not in accord with it. We are not saved in this supreme sense. The human heart, the human will, is not thus open to God. The wave of the Divine vitality, passing upward from nature where it runs so free and is so welcome, finds obstruction and barriers in us. God is ever striving to pour himself through humanity as freely as he does through nature. We resist him. We beat back the Infinite truth and love. We close the valves through which he must enter.

Do you ever ask why there is so much evil, wretchedness, wrong, in the social world? — why God does not stay it or cripple it or annihilate it, why he suffers it under his pure and loving eye? I tell you, my troubled friend, God is trying to reach it. He can reach it only through human affection, human labor, human organization. When he makes a perfect apple it is not by dropping one from the skies, but by effusing his spirit through the substance of a tree made as the form for his life, and until the tree is ready the fruit must be delayed. And so God does not, perhaps we may say cannot, come immediately into society, into history, to grapple with evil. He must move against it by his charity through human hearts, the form of charity; by his justice, through human consciences; by his truth, through human intellects; by his energy, through human wills. Wave after wave, surge after surge, is beating continually from the spiritual world at the doors of human nature to get through and sweep away wrong. We resist him. You and I, by our choice of ease, by our degraded passions, by our wrong use of money, by suffering the fires of aspiration to die out and do no work for lack of fuel, resist him, hold off his holy life from the world, bar up so many avenues through which he would strike at evil and displace it.

“Behold I stand at the door and knock,” is the keynote of his relations to humanity. In nature there is no sinful choice or will to stop him. In

us there is. That we have such a will is our glory, the stamp of our heavenly birth, the possibility of our sonship. That we use it so is our shame, guilt, and peril. And history moves slowly toward righteousness and social order, because the Infinite respects this capacity in us too highly to break it down, and so make us puppets of his pleasure, and because he can find no swift access through us to build up the kingdom of heaven on the overthrow of iniquity.

A few days ago I saw in New York in a gallery of British art just opened, a picture by a living English painter, that illustrates this last and most serious suggestion of our subject, and which has been pronounced by a prominent critic "one of the very noblest works of sacred art ever produced in this or any other age." It represents Christ standing at the door of a cottage and knocking for entrance. In his left hand he bears a lantern — symbol of the conscience — that casts a red and ominous light. He is clad in a white tunic, emblem of purity and the power of the Spirit; over this a jewelled blue robe and breastplate, as the supreme priest of humanity; and upon his head is the crown that proclaims him king of men, intertwined with thorns that have budded into healing leaves, and that spread an intense though serene splendor through the upper space of the picture. The brow is wide; the eyes are solemn, sad, and tender; the expression of the mouth is inexpressibly sweet and calm. Thus he stands

knocking at the cottage door, which is the artist's representation of the human heart. The door is shut. It is the avenue through which heavenly visitations must enter, and it has plainly been long closed, perhaps never opened since early childhood. It is barred, and the bolts are rusty. Brambles have grown up thick and tall before it. Creeping tendrils of ivy have fastened on its stanchions. A bat hovers around, showing that the air is dark and foul. Majesty, patience, and pity are in the countenance of the visitant who seeks to be a guest. Will the door be opened? Will the prickly guards and the rusty fastenings give way in response to those solemn and gracious blows from eternity that should rouse the sleeper within? That the picture does not tell us. That the face of Christ does not declare. He only stands and knocks.

And so the Spirit stands at your door and mine. And so, it may be, the brambles greet its coming, showing that there are no free communications between our souls and heaven. And so the door may be locked, and tough briers may beset it, and the bats may flit about it, to tell that on the heavenly side of our nature we have no day. And so it may have been year after year. While nature is open and orderly and bountiful, we may be growing more and more hostile to heaven and Christ by habit, shut up within ourselves, desolate and useless. If so, the condition we are in is the sermon, the appeal, the pleading, the warning.

The Spirit's most solemn knock is this revelation to us of our state. Shall we go on thus listless, thus defiant of celestial pleadings, till earthly seasons shall draw to a close with us, till the cottage door and roof of our mortality shall fall and leave us in the open infinite, so that still it shall be true of us, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved"?

1857.

XIII.

THE ORGAN AND ITS SYMBOLISM.

"Praise him with stringed instruments and organs." — *Psalms*
cl. 4.

THE introduction of a new and excellent organ into our church deserves more special and elaborate notice than we gave to it a few weeks ago, when its music made its first appeal to our hearts. To-day I intend to address you on the nobleness of the organ as an instrument of religious expression, and the symbolic lessons that are offered to us, through its structure, concerning spiritual truth and life.

The Psalm from which the text is taken uses the word "organ"; but the writer had no reference to such an instrument as we have placed in our church. If the object thus designated could be brought before you, you would see a series of reeds, which the performer played upon by his mouth, — no more like the complicated structure before me than a minnow is like Leviathan. The true organ is a victory of far later skill. The Christian churches, probably, were not acquainted with it till the thirteenth century. And the op-

portunity to have organs so freely in our houses of worship, and of so high an average of excellence, is a privilege which the last hundred years have given to Christendom.

A grand organ is a work of art in a high sense, and represents, also, a long succession of ingenious triumphs over mechanical difficulties. When you listen to the smooth and rich combinations of tones poured out from several stops of our organ, and blending admirably into a massive surge of harmony, it would greatly increase your appreciation of the music if you could have a sense of the complicated apparatus, and the slowly mounting triumphs of skill in its arrangement, by which the inspiring result is gained. The ordinary conception of an organ is compounded simply of a bellows, some pipes, and keys. Of the mysteries of its construction we are most of us as ignorant as we are of its history. If we could all of us be made acquainted, to-day, with the methods by which all those 1,466 pipes are touched "to fine issues,"—the skill with which the all-animating air, which they expire in melody, is supplied to them from the bellows, through the wind-trunks, into the air-chests, by the further aid of grooves and sound-boards and tables and sliders, and then by what cunning economy of pressure and spring the proper amount of breath is driven through each tube that is to be wakened into song; if we could know how the three organs of which every grand instrument is composed—the pedal,

the choir organ, and the swell — are wrought into unity, how by couplings they can be made to play together at a single touch, and how the manuals and pedals have been prepared by dextrous machinery for perfect action ; if we could learn by what repeated and nice experiments the best woods and metals had been discovered for the structure of pipes, and the finest combinations of the two kinds, and their proper length for different notes and for the best tones, and how new stops had been invented to increase the compass and refine the voice of the instrument, and what delicacy of taste is required, and has been exhibited, in blending and balancing the songs of the different stops into a smooth chorus, kindred with the skill a master shows in harmonizing the colors of a picture to a proper tone ; if we could, further, be made sensible of the patient talent that has been expended in contests with the disorders that seem to be connected of necessity with an instrument so bulky, complicated, and cumbrous, to prevent leakings, rattlings, unbidden sounds, creakings, and hoarse laborings of the machinery, and the scores of troubles which the changes of weather induce, and, beyond these, could be made aware of the difficulties that have been grappled, and the genius that has been put to use, in connection with the whole subject of temperament, tuning, and pitch of an organ, — we should see that we get our noble instrument, as we get all the richest blessings of civilization, out of the benefactions of

centuries ; we should look upon it as a sign and summary of the dreams of scores of artists, and the adroitness of countless artisans ; and the first lesson its music would breathe into our souls would be a new rendering of the words of Jesus, "Other men labored, and ye have entered into their labors."

And yet the greatest marvel connected with an organ is, that genius makes itself felt through all the varieties and intricacies and unwillingness of its mechanism. It does not seem strange, when a man is blowing a bugle, or playing upon a harp that accompanies his song, that his soul should make itself felt through the metal and the strings. He comes into immediate connection with the instrument, and we can understand how the greater depth or richness or delicacy of feeling of one performer should make itself manifest in contrast with another. But in the organ the performer is put at a great distance from his real instrument. The air is provided by unintelligent machinery. He touches dead keys with his fingers, and wooden springs with his feet, and they pull upon lines that open valves and let in air, according to fixed rules, to the pipes we hear. Yet think of the subtlety of those wooden springs, those cords, those slides and valves, in response to the quality of the touch whose bidding they serve. From the heart, from the intellect, from the passion, from the inmost soul of the artist the exquisite and inexpressible thrill is conveyed with the mechanical impulse

that makes the pipes vocal, so that the tones tell you by their purity, their modulation, their tremulousness, their exultant soaring, or their pathetic cadence, the rank and quality of the feeling or the thought that has possession of the man whose fingers move the keys. I do not know any stronger testimony to the creative, and we may almost say miraculous, power of human genius in finding expression, than this fact that an organ, so encumbered with machinery which would seem to neutralize all delicate differences in the pressure on its keys and the pull upon its strings, is just as sensitive to the quality of the performer's touch as if his soul were directly breathing through the pipes. In how many ways does God try to tell us that this world is arranged by his wisdom as a scene for the expression of character! This power of genius over matter, this responsiveness of metal and tube and string to the inmost emotion of the artist as well as to the coarser pressure of his hand, is only one branch of the greater law that all which we are publishes itself, that our secret quality tends to proclaim itself as from the house-top. As we are seen from the spiritual world, our latent quality, whether good or evil, is seen impressed on our conduct, breathes out upon the whole sphere that surrounds us. We play off our hidden music, whether vile or holy, upon the world. And this sensitive echo of the organ to the soul of the performer is only one variation of the mighty truth that undertones the govern-

ment of God, which it behooves us to meditate, and to apply to our states: "There is nothing secret which shall not be made manifest, neither anything hid which shall not be known and come abroad."

But let us turn now from these niceties of artistic expression through the instrument to the general quality of the instrument itself. The merits of an organ are not to be spoken of without allusion to its defects. There is scarcely any instrument that in some narrow line is not its superior. In fineness and delicacy of tone and the capacity of expressing the most tender and subtle feeling, there is no portion of it which is comparable with the violin; nor can any of its pipes breathe a melody so sweet as a perfect flute exhales. Its distinction, of course, lies in the complication of the voices that lie at the command of its keys, and the vast range of its tones, from the thunder of the pedal to the piercing soprano of the sesquialter. It is a whole band put at the service of a single will, while all the instruments, intoned by the common air, have a quality fundamentally kindred, so that they can be always kept in tune and time. And then its power of sustaining tones, and of swelling them as they are prolonged, distinguishes it as greatly from all other instruments in the possibility of producing grand effects as it is inferior to many others in its capacity for uttering refined and thrilling melody. For majesty it is the imperial instrument. The viol, the flute, the trumpet, the bugle, each is an organ of

music, but this is emphatically the organ. Let a man listen to one built up to the full resources of modern art, as it should pour out a chorus or anthem of Handel, a fugue of Bach, or the close of the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven, and how applicable, while his soul was heaving with the undulations thus inspired, would the language seem to the instrument which a poet of our own city used of Beethoven, —

“What a vast, majestic structure thou hast builded out of sound,
 With its high peak piercing heaven and its base deep under ground!
 Vague as air, yet firm and real to the spiritual eye,
 Seamed with fire its cloudy bastions far away uplifted lie,
 Like those solemn shapes of thunder we behold at close of day,
 Piled upon the far horizon where the jagged lightnings play.
 Awful voices, as from Hades, thrill us, growling from its heart;
 Sudden splendors blaze from out it, cleaving its black walls apart;
 White-winged birds dart forth and vanish, singing as they pass
 from sight,
 Till at last it lifts, and 'neath it shows a field of amber light,
 Where some single star is shining, throbbing like a new-born thing,
 And the earth, all drenched in splendor, lets its happy voices sing.”

This majesty, thus native to the tone and movement of the organ, makes it pre-eminently the instrument for religious expression. Many of the old organs intended for the churches of the Continent were grotesquely ornamented with figures of angels bearing trumpets in their hands, sometimes with kettle-drums that were beaten by the movable arms of angels, and now and then might be seen on one a gigantic angel hovering over the other forms, beating time with a baton. There are records, too, of organs on which the

figure of King David, larger than life, was prominent, with an expression of joy on his face, playing the harp. Doubtless the cause of this repulsive tawdriness was the undisciplined feeling that the organ is, by eminence, the ally of the Church, and the appropriate voice of the most profound and the most soaring sentiments inspired by religion. Especially was there fitness in placing the rude effigy of David upon the casing of the instrument. How would he have rejoiced if this musical mammoth had been known, in something like its present proportions, in his day; if he could have said, in our sense of the term, "Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs"; if, instead of the feeble harp to fan his poetic and pious glow when he retired to meditate on the sparkling wonders of the firmament, and to compare their eloquence about the Divine Presence to the melodious quiver of silver strings stretched across the night, or to celebrate the power of God shown in the shaking of the wilderness by the storm, or the influence that heaves and stills the sea, or the shooting of lightnings as coals of fire, and the bursting of the torrents upon the hill-sides when the foundations of the mountains were shaken because He was wroth, he could have seated himself in some retired chamber of his palace, at such an instrument as we have here to-day, and quickened, while he expressed, the holy passion that swept him through the responses to it from the colossal heart which he awakened by

keys! If this could have been, the Bible would be richer to-day in Psalms. There was no instrument — trumpet or sackbut or psaltery — which he did not bring into the temple and command to open its voice unto God. And if in his day an instrument so peculiarly pitched in unison with the reaches of thought and the vastnesses of feeling that pervade the principal Psalms could have been at his service in his creative moments, to stimulate and convey the emotion that strove within him, we may doubt if language could have borne the tumultuous heavings of his rapture or the mountings of his adoration. We may doubt whether we should not have had anthem-chords like those of Handel two thousand years before the time, and have received the Psalms on the mighty wings of harmonies born of the Spirit on Mount Zion.

It is well that we have one instrument which belongs, by its very temperament and the reverence of its cadences, to the religious sentiment. And is it not suggestive when we find that it is the grandest of all instruments, the one which centuries have been widening and perfecting, that offers itself thus to religion, that moves as it were instinctively to the service of the church, that domesticates itself at once in the sanctuary? Is it not a voice in favor of the reverence in things, a voice proclaiming the inherent and everlasting sanctity of music itself, a voice that ought to pierce the nature of every unconsecrated man,

when we find that the moment we combine wood and metal and receptacles of air by such cunning and into such proportions as to make the most lordly of instruments, its rhythm and its motions are such that it refuses to be secular? Profane uses cannot handle it. It will not go to the battle nor the dance nor the serenade. It asks for psalms and anthems, for masses and misereres. It is the holy Nazarite, and cannot leave the courts of the Lord.

I have developed this point that you may possibly be led to feel, as we all ought to feel, the privilege we enjoy in having, by the grace of genius in these later centuries, an instrument in our churches answering, through the complication of its structure and the range of its expression, to the majesty and breadth of the Bible itself, an instrument which seems to be the Bible recast into ranges of pipes, octaves sublime as though the book of Exodus were melted into music, and chords pathetic and yearning as the lament of Jesus over Jerusalem. And further, that the reverent and adoring quality and movement of its music may address us hereafter, as it prepares us for worship or helps us in devotion, with an appeal for religious living, as the only truth of the moral world, since God has made the natural world on such a plan, and intoned dead matter with such affinities, that the very breathings and vibrations of the air, in the chief instrument of music, have the spirit and measure of chants and hymns.

The organ, moreover, to one familiar with its structure, and with an eye that readily seizes a symbol, suggests a valuable lesson concerning the diversities of the religious world. Every organ is composed of several series of pipes, each series being called a stop. The value of each stop is, that it breathes out and modulates, with more or less compass, a certain pervading quality of tone. Some stops cannot be played together without producing painful discord, so penetrative and total is their dissonance ; while, if a larger number are drawn, so that we get nearer to the full compass of the instrument, they broaden and enrich the harmony.

Now, have we not here a noble language for expressing the structure and diversities, the uses and the service, of the parties and the literatures of the Christian Church? The Church is one, like an organ ; it is diverse and broken, like the ranges of its pipes. The sects are its stops.

I beg you to see, brethren, by an attentive consideration, that this is not a fancy, and that it is not merely speculative and unpractical. I beg you to see that the organ is able to help us to a principle that is just and generous, and that stimulates a wise charity. The Church universal lives by the breath of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit, sweeping into history from the infinite deep of God and making itself vocal in the literature and life of Christendom, through consecrated minds and sanctified souls and beneficent hands.

So broad is the current of the truth which first broke into our stagnant air over Palestine, and has been widening since upon the nations, that it wakens peculiar tones of every temperament, and strikes, as we may say, a fresh chord in every century. We cannot too often repeat that Christianity is not a certain amount of religious truth locked up in a written record, but that it is a holy influence from the spiritual world, which struck one or two keynotes at its first coming, filling the soul of Jesus and a few Apostles with their melody, and which pours on to waken some new chord and variation in every nation and age. The true point in Scripture from which to survey it, and by which it should be interpreted, is the record of Pentecost, when the rushing mighty wind filled the house where the disciples gathered, and kindled such speech that men of various kingdoms heard each class in their own tongue.

So it has been ever since. Out of various temperaments, which cannot coincide precisely in their tones, and which lie open by their structure to different modulations of religious truth, the Spirit evokes the voices which it needs. The sects are various stops in the organ of Christendom. Some are narrow in their range, and give us no sweeping, largely rounded literature. Some waken for us, when they are drawn, like the Methodist, the cheering gamut of grace. Some, like the Calvinists, shake the air with the mutterings of Infinite wrath and the thunderous vibrations of the

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law. Some are the dulciana stops, that sprinkle sweetness and cheer, like sunshine, upon souls ; some are ranged for the mystic melodies that repeat the keynote of the Gospel of John ; and some, like the Universalists, are, in the structure of Christendom, like the viol-d'amour stop, that is so sweet in our own organ, repeating continually the pathos and pleadings of Infinite love.

Even the three great divisions of the Christian Church — the Catholic or Ritual, the Evangelical or Sacrificial, and the Spiritual, which includes all the branches of liberal Christianity — repeat the three separate organs — pedal, choir, and swell — that are blended to complete every full-toned instrument.

Still, I ask you to see that I am not led away by this analogy. Of course, I do not mean to assert that the hostile dogmas of different sects are necessary to the completeness and unity of Christian truth. A dozen intellectual contradictions cannot combine into catholic verity. But the sentiments which different churches stand for and work out, though they may be connected with doctrines that are utterly uncongenial, are essential to the fulness of religious truth and the complete compass of the Spirit in the Church. Churches and sects exist by and for the sentiments they appeal to and feed. Their dogma is husk ; this is corn. I do not believe the Calvinistic creed : perhaps no two consecutive or selected propositions of it coincide with the intel-

lectual truth of heaven. But, brethren, there is a severity and stringency in the law of God and in its hold upon us, as solemn, as certain, as awful, as the hoarse sub-bass of Calvinism. It is not the whole music of Christendom, but it is the ground tone of the truth of things. If you say that it arbitrarily dooms a soul to eternal woe, you misinterpret it; if you strike it out from your conception of life and the universe, you debilitate the Gospel, and strike out the pedal terrors, that, none the less for Christ's coming, roar around a deliberately evil career and character. So, too, there is truth in the love of God, his patient waiting, pleading, never-tiring love, sweet as the most cordial Universalism ever breathed. The Universalists may be wrong at a thousand points in their rendering of texts, and their combination of proofs for their doctrine from Scripture; but in this sentiment, and in their faith that the love of God for each particular soul will last as long as his justice and as long as eternity, they are not wrong. Only both the truths must go together; the grace and the bass must interblend, one giving body to the other, and one mellowing the other; neither must be hampered by fetters of time, or interpreted in regard to time, before you get the true harmony of the Spirit. Still further, there is a depravity in human life deep and dreadful as the plummet of Augustine sounded; and there is glory in human nature high and lustrous as the vision that charmed the upward

gaze of Channing ; there is a homely substance to all true religion which no moralist, wedded to the Epistle of James, can set forth too roughly, and there is a mystic truth in correspondences between the celestial and the visible world as penetrating and comprehensive as the Epistle to the Hebrews and the uncounted volumes of Swedenborg would disclose. The intellectual settings may be inaccurate, but the spiritual truth, the sentiments they enclose, are right, and increase the compass of the Spirit in Christendom and the volume of its harmony.

It is well to remember, in connection with this symbolism of the organ, that only those elements of the faith and life of every church which can pass up into noble anthems, chants, and hymns, which can be set to music, are its worthy and enduring elements. You cannot put proofs of the trinity or controversial supports of the unity of God, the arguments of Bishop Bull or the arguments of Professor Norton, into hymns. You cannot chant rubrics, and thirty-nine articles, and damnable clauses of the Athanasian formula. But reverence for God, devout prostration before the law which "the Father" represents, love for the pity and sacrifice which "the Son" interprets, joy in the ever-present grace, and prayer for the quickening life, which "the Spirit" symbolizes, adoration of Infinite holiness, submission to Infinite sovereignty, grateful trust in Infinite love, — sentiments in which Trinitarian and Unitarian,

Calvinist and Arminian, Partialist and Universalist, come at once into fellowship, — these fly to music for expression. And this would be a good test of the breadth and richness of the faith of any sect, — how much of it could be lifted directly out of propositions and be better worked off into expression on an organ, and how much of the whole amplitude of the organ, from its rumbling ground-tier of pipes to its softest lute-vibrations would it call into play?

No sect can command the whole chromatic gamut which the Gospel sweeps. Here is the continual call for charity and humility and joy in the comprehensiveness of Christianity. It needs the full choir of churches for its expression. It cannot spare any stop in the organ-growth of history. Each new sect that endures is a new range of pipes, taking up a slighted sentiment, or working some more delicate tone or elaborate variation into the symphony of grace. We shall drop our intellectual differences about trinity and unity, free will and constraining grace, when we reach heaven. But we shall still be ranged, there as here, by the sentiments we most naturally give utterance to. We shall see then, doubtless, what need there is of the utmost power of every party to celebrate the circle of the Divine glory, how deep is the justice, how high the love, how wide the providence, that are twined into the pure harmony of the heavenly hallelujah.

I regret that time is not left me to develop the

points of analogy between a man — each human soul — and an organ ; affinities that are no more interesting than they are impressive, practical, and searching. St. Paul compared the human soul to a temple, which was the grandest work of genius he knew ; and the highest value of any commanding piece of art is to reflect back upon us some testimony to the complexity and marvel of our own constitution.

There is not a person here whose spirit is not an unspeakably more intricate and delicate organ-ism than the instrument we are speaking of. Your powers, as related to the chief duties of life and the structure of society, are fitly represented by the sets of pipes in the organ. In every man there is the domestic stop, the business stop, the political stop, the religious stop. Some men do not show the fineness of their capacity till a particular one of these is drawn and played alone. They are hard in trade, but genial and sweet at home ; or they honor integrity in their dealings, but do not support national loyalty to the highest truth in their votes and public influence ; or they are good citizens and good parents, but not reverent citizens of God's kingdom, the range of their religious affections being small and seldom waked into articulation. The true man is in tune through the whole series of his faculties, and will not suffer that any powers which God has wrought into his nature shall be closed against his Spirit and be wasted by disuse.

Ah, brethren, we should call it desecration if the instrument that leads our choir should be profaned every Sunday by the touch of levity, waking only inane or frivolous music from its deeps. But how is it with us? What if God hears more Christian melody, more religious aspiration, more of the phrasings of humility and the soarings of devout joy, from that instrument than from us? What if we are lower than that and are condemned by it? What if it is our souls that are desecrated by successions of trivial thoughts, by frivolous habits, by impure passions, by unserviceable living, so that they send no music, comparable with that of this unconscious Cyclops, to the throne?

Every great theme leads at last, somehow, to him who gives us the stature of a perfect man,—to Jesus Christ.

There is a singular legend connected with the village of Eusserthal in Switzerland, which takes its name from a convent that was once celebrated but has now completely disappeared. The choir of the convent church is, however, still left, and is used as a place of worship. Large stories are told in the village about the enormous wealth of the convent, especially about a certain golden organ that once stood in the church, and was played during divine service. When the convent was on one occasion attacked by enemies, the first care of the monks was to secure this treasure. They dragged it to a marsh which was formerly in the valley, and sank it as deep as they could.

However, they had saved their treasure to no purpose, inasmuch as they were compelled to fly, and died in distant parts, while the convent fell to ruin. Every one is perfectly aware that the organ is still somewhere in the neighborhood of the church, but the precise spot where it lies is utterly unknown. Nevertheless, every seven years it rises out of the depths at midnight, and its sublime tones are heard in the distance. Nothing is at all comparable to the gentle breathings of the golden pipes in the open air during the solemn stillness of night. Soon the soft tones swell into mighty billows of sound, which rush through the narrow valley, until the noise again subsides, and ends with a light echo in the forest. But no one has ventured to obtain a sight of the organist who holds the music in his power, and thus the discovery of the treasure is reserved for the future. So the Spirit of God once filled the avenues of our humanity in the soul of Jesus, mysteriously born, mysteriously taken from the world, — the golden organ of celestial truth and human capacity and Infinite love. And so, though buried deep by the thick selfishness and injustice of this world, that music once heard on the open day in far-off Palestine rises again and swells over the din of war, over crime, over slavery, over all hatreds and all wrong. We listen when its sweetness rolls thus, and rises and swells and sweeps, and we say, that is truth, that is religion, that is the music to which our souls were attuned in heaven. Strive and

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pray, my brother, to bring your soul into chord with it, that it may in part be repeated through you, and widened beyond you, so that you may do something to help the world come into harmony with it, so that the very mountains shall break forth into singing and all the valleys be filled with joy.

1857.

XIV.

THE SUPREME-COURT DECISION,* AND OUR DUTIES.

"Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy." —
Isaiah ix. 3.

THE difference between national power and national character, between the success and the worthiness of a state, is suggested at once by these words. Scientific insight shows us that a planet is under the dominion of the law of gravitation precisely as a pebble is ; and religious insight leads us to study the life, and estimate the merits and the perils, of an empire in the same light and by the same standards that we should apply to any single person. And so religious insight prevents us from accepting the mere numbers, the opulence, the prominence, and the power of a state as sufficient justification for joy in its existence, just as it forbids us to acknowledge such tests for private persons. If a man is a sensualist, a knave, a gambler, or a ruffian, no honest mind thinks of praising him, or of calling him respectable, because he is strong-limbed and in florid

* In the case of Dred Scott.

health, because he lives in a handsome house, is worth a million, and adds largely every year to his meadows and park. These splendid circumstances only furnish a pedestal for a piece of incarnate depravity to make its vileness conspicuous and repulsive. And a nation may be vigorous in physical health, and may be gaining thus, while it is going backward and downward in character.

The noble elements which a nation embodies and represents, and which gleam as expressions upon the lineaments which its countenance will wear in history, constitute its glory. Mere numbers, as of the Chinese, Hindoos, or Turks, awaken no satisfaction in the competent student.

The brawny energy that tugs at the conquest of nature; that pushes out pioneers whose axes mow the wilderness, and whose ploughs furrow the prairies; that quarries counties for coal, and tames the torrents for its wheels, and clamps state with state by iron, and plucks the pines for the masts of its "great ammirals," and makes the air over wide longitudes buzz with furious and cunning mechanism, — this, in contrast with lazy content or nerveless beggary, properly awakens joy in the aspect of a nation. And when, out of this groundwork of enthusiastic strength, an intellectual force is born that dots the land with schools, which lead up to academies, and in turn are crowned with colleges, from which literatures blossom and shed the fragrance of culture and poetry in the social air, there is new and higher call for

satisfaction and gratitude. And if a religious spirit presses for utterance out of the widening life of the state, so that churches grow as naturally from its soil as court-rooms, capitols, and schools; and if the religion of the people, instead of being a selfish commerce with infinite power for private insurance against suspected peril, is a reverent and glad recognition of the Infinite mind as the source of truth, and the Infinite heart as unspeakable love, and the church spires catch a life from heaven that runs into the depths of the popular soul, quickening the general conscience, softening the common heart, kindling the national mind, so that, if poverty begins to border the general plenty, the national genius turns to study for the wisest relief of it by the quick impulse of duty, and when vice and crime burst to the surface the conscience of the state is moved as quickly to devise cures as to build prisons; and if, as destitution and degradation and hostilities of class and race increase and deepen through the unskilful organization of interests, aptitudes, and property, the religious vitality still multiplies its help, in schools for the poor, and hospitals of every name, and organizations of reform, and persistent efforts for equal laws, and a spirit of humanity breathing fervid and pathetic through literature, so that no toil of thought or heart is given over to resist the stealthy forces of wrong and decay from poisoning the springs of vigor, — then a spectacle is seen grander than any miracle of

genius, any individual heroism, any personal sanctity; for then a nation stands out with intellect on its forehead, chivalry in its carriage, and Christianity in its heart.

The depravity of the world is shown in the difficulty of organizing any other than selfish elements into the public dealings of nations. The divinity of the Gospel is sufficiently proved by its hope and its endeavor to institute humanity into one body, so that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of the Lord and his Christ.

Turning from this general picture and this ideal glory to our own land and character, it will be fair to say that parts of our empire have been gaining in worthiness and dignity. I need not dwell at any length on the point that God has marvellously multiplied the nation even within an ordinary lifetime, — how our area has broadened, how we have built States in less time than it has often taken to rear a palace; how we have received races into our bosom, and distributed them by tens of thousands over our domain, without jar to the widespread peace; how our wealth has increased by the rivalling contributions of the climates, and the chairs of our Senate-room represent the hardihood that defies the Atlantic storms and the golden lustre of the Pacific shores.

No such inspiring spectacle is presented by the public life of any European kingdom, or any nation known to history, as the civilization and

the prospects of several of the free States of this Republic present to a philosopher and a philanthropist to-day. But the whole nation, the public life into which all the States are united, and which gives expression to the central government as other lands look upon us, does not deserve this decision. While its wealth and power have been waxing, its nobleness has been waning. "God has multiplied the nation, but not increased the joy."

I will not speak especially of the lack of intellectual dignity in our politics, of the impossibility of getting a consistent policy, based on general economic principles, recognized in the regulation of our commercial affairs, or of the fact that the grade of talent in those who win success as representatives of the nation is steadily and swiftly sinking; for our attention is called rather to the more glaring and the more dispiriting proofs of it when we look at the principles which this people are called to represent before the world, and think of the treatment they receive from the central powers here.

A lighthouse is not more manifestly built to bear aloft and protect a light, than the American polity was founded, reared, and cemented to enshrine and diffuse a generous doctrine of the worth and the rights of human nature; and a lighthouse no more fatally fails of its organic purpose when its upper windows are blackened, and it is used by one household for selfish convenience and private ends, than the American government fails of its

Providential purpose if its political literature and spirit shed no blaze of cheer to other nations and over the stormy experience of history.

The doctrine of the worth of human nature, and the wrong of social and instituted insult to it, was as solemnly committed to us as a people as the doctrine of one God to be worshipped by the holiness of life was committed to the Hebrews, to be worked out in their polity and their literature, and to be guarded and respected by the very mental instincts of their race, so that any offence offered to that doctrine should be an offence against the personality of their state. And it should affect us with no more surprise and disgust to read of Samuel tampering with idols, or Elijah bowing to Baal for Philistine votes, or David writing non-committal Psalms in balanced honor of Jehovah and Ashtaroth, or prophets keeping silent about public iniquity, and proclaiming the will of the reigning monarch as a higher law than the righteousness of the Lord of Hosts, than to think of the spirit of the American government flagging from the support of the civil sacredness of human nature, or of its literature, diplomatic and legal, failing to turn, like the awful sword-flame before Eden, as a watch and a terror against the pollution of that principle.

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[After recounting previous violations of liberty by the general government, the preacher proceeds to his arraignment of the Supreme Court.]

Such is the dark story which the last few years tell as to the character of the central government, in relation to the sentiment which the personality of our empire should guard, as to the deepening scowls and hatred of its countenance at any generous policy and literature of humanity. "God has multiplied the nation, but not increased the joy."

And now, to crown these terrors, comes the recent decision of the Supreme Court of the country, a fitting cupola for the grim Bastile into which the moral insanity that has ruled us would convert our polity!

One knows not where to turn in the dreadful circle of its infamy, where to begin the detail of its blackness.

It is obvious that we must call it a deliberate creation of wrong and oppression. The most timid conservative can see that there was no necessity for it in the Constitution or in our history. Would not this of itself be enough to blast it? Ought not a judgment so heinous morally, and contradictory to the legitimate sweep of the sentiments that have inspired our noblest men, to be required so plainly by the language of the Constitution that no eye could fail to read the dreadful duty of our highest court to expound it? What then must we say when they have toiled to put it into shape, and to justify it by a show of logic and learning? Fallen though these men were by the corrupting influence of the slave-system on

their passions and their reason, yet, like Milton's leaders of the angels banished from heaven, they did not descend to this pit by natural gravitation; they have "sunk by compulsion and laborious flight."

Further than this, when the opposing decisions shall have been compared before the careful thought of the country, — the sinewy logic and symmetrical strength of that masterly paper which the genius of Massachusetts contributed,* with the tortuous pleading of the judgment which will now be the Magna Charta of tyranny, — it will be seen that our highest court has not only sunk by labor to that edict, but that they have spun it out of nothing, out of documents that do not hold it, and history that was never lived. It will be seen that they have perverted the life-elements of the Constitution to distil it, as the upas-tree perverts the pure moisture of heaven to sweat its blistering juices, or as the viper secretes from innocent food the poison of his fangs. These men, it will be clearly seen by the intellect of this land, have printed their passion, and that mental malignity which slavery engenders, over the paragraphs of the Constitution, and thus have startled us with nothing less than a *coup d'état*. They have written a revolution.

Only we must say that, as a work of oppression, this decision is more awful than any installation of despotism by any historic *coup d'état*. It is

* Mr. Justice Curtis's dissenting opinion.

such a movement of oppression in Christendom as was never known before. It sweeps a race outside the privileges of national law by its decision that no black man, or man of African blood, can be a citizen of the United States under the provisions of the Constitution. And it makes no limit to its savage edict. It does not tell us what constitutes the black man, nor what constitutes the white. Another has well asked, "Where is the line between shade deepening into shade, or sable passing into the transparency of a veil of alabaster, so indistinguishable that the line between darkness and the first pale glimpses of the dawn might be easier mathematically whipped across the heavens; where is the line that sets on the one side the inhabitant of the zone of darkness, as a creature only born to be enslaved, created to be mere property, a creature all merchandise, and the inhabitant of the other zone of whiteness as the rightful tyrant, possessor, owner, of the whole sable race as of a hogshhead or a wheelbarrow?" This decision, if it follows the principle of the slave-law, makes every child of a mother that has any mixture of African blood a portion of the African race, and so a civil pariah in the regard of the organized government and all its statutes. The freed children of Saxon fathers liberated by the tortured conscience of the parent, and endowed perhaps with Saxon energy in their veins, only pass from the justice of their paternal owners to be stamped with public infamy by the

broad seal of the United States Court. Rev. Mr. Pennington, a black clergyman of New York, formerly a slave, and educated abroad, whom a German university honored with a doctorate of philosophy and theology, can get no recognition from such a court that his learning and piety belong to a human being. And Frederick Douglas, attested in his spiritual constitution as a nobleman of nature, and made pre-eminent, even among white men, by the endowment from Heaven of the sacred fire of genius, can have no passport as a son or citizen of America to carry with him to Europe ; must beg in vain for any pennant of the navy to flutter in his protection, or for any cannon to look a threat in his behalf, if an Austrian official should seize him, as Martin Kosta, an adopted white man, was protected in a foreign port ; yes, and if in any national hall of justice he should speak for any invaded right of his, with an eloquence more than a match for any pleader of the State that once held him as a slave, he must retire before the breath of this decree, ostracized and outcast from even the cold notice of the law.

A despot publishes his oppressive bull, but his whim may change ; his fears may be appealed to, and the next year he may revoke it. At any rate the grave is lying in wait for him, and his child or his successor may undo his mischief, and may be as noble as he is depraved. But woe when the spirit of evil, as the Psalm says, "frameth mischief by a law"! That institutes and intrenches

iniquity, organizing it into the fibres of state. And deeper woe when oppression, as in this ruling, goes back of even law itself; shows what laws shall be final; lifts up the standard of oppression in accordance with which alone laws shall be made; drives its iron stake of tyranny, upon which, as fast as they may be engrossed by Congresses and signed by Presidents, the noblest laws enacting justice for a race shall be impaled as waste paper, lacking the American quality! And crowning woe of all, when history and our ancestors are vilified in order to draw from them the sanction for this horror; when the judgment is so drafted that it shuffles behind the names of noble men, whose spirits it should seem might be evoked from heaven by the sorcery of such insult to blast them with indignation; when it skulks, as this judgment demonstrably does, behind a historic lie!

We are all startled now to see that we have an element of tyranny worked into our polity more subtle and vital, so long as the present constitution of the Supreme Court shall hold, than any government of Europe shows. For in the Old World, if the seats of political authority are controlled by the will and conscience of the nation, everything is safe; but here we have an impregnable breakwater in the passions of five men against a majority of millions, a united press, an overwhelming plurality of Congress, a unanimous Cabinet, and the seal of the President himself!

And the conviction is burned into the heart of every American that this awful power is now to be exercised to jeer at the claim that a man with African color on his skin, though God has put genius in his brain and the Holy Spirit in his heart, and though New York or Massachusetts may welcome him and honor him as equal to any of the highest in its civil society, can be fit to stand with a naturalized Irishman or a desperado from the Five Points as a claimant for equity in the imperial courts of the Republic!

Must we not say before Heaven, "Thou hast multiplied the nation, but not increased the joy," when we think that such an edict is supreme over our literature? The slave-system has been working through years for foothold in literature in the hope of finding rhetoric and logic to hurl back against the general derision and hiss of genius. It has been able to command no history, no political economy, no poetry, no fiction that is respectable; but it has triumphed by planting its banner over the supreme tribunal of the national mind. Every intellectual man feels now that this streamer floats over the national thought. And we can forecast the way in which it will work on the sentiments and character of thousands; how it will paralyze noble sentiment in them and drain off the moral fluids from their nature, and make them accept it for the sake of place, and turn them into mere governmental muscles, and whip them beyond the point of sorrowful and external acknowl-

edgment that it is law, until reversed, into a passionate and jubilant defence of it. For the slave-system works on minds in our politics just as slavery works on the soil: it sucks the generous juices out of it, withers it, dries it into sand, and leaves it fit only for nettles and weeds.

And now Providence sets this decision before us to try our religious state, to test the thoroughness of our consecration, to ask what we are ready to do about it. I could not have chosen any other theme for a public and a Christian fast-day; for there is no public sin of recent manifestation so suggestive and frightful as this eruption of evil out of the constitutional blood of the country, there is no symptom that shows more vividly the moral vice that we have been pampering in the public soul, and there is no question that will probe the vitality of the Christian forces of life in a state like a question involving antipathies of race.

We are called now to meet politically, in the light of Christianity, the problem with which early Christianity itself was set to wrestle. Our religion came into the world a proclamation of universal spiritual liberty and love. But the Jewish race, to whom it was intrusted, had pronounced by their supreme Pharisaic courts that all other races were alien, and that, in the regard of their fathers, the Gentiles had no rights which a Hebrew was bound to respect. And so the Jewish Christians refused, at first, to receive alien converts to equal citizenship in the Church and to think

of them as equal with themselves in the regard of Heaven. The regular Apostles themselves, the supreme judges in the Christian community, came near yielding to this prejudice, and certainly opposed it with no passion. But Paul stood for the outcast nations. The Gospel is not worth saving, he said, if it is not broad enough to redeem all the spirits God has created ; if, while sin is not local, and misery is not local, and death is not Jewish, the Gospel, which strives to reverse these, cannot flow as widely with its medicine as they flow with their taint. And so he translated it into the universal dialect, and made the selfish language of the world thrill with that sentence, — "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, but all are one in Christ Jesus."

That movement and that sentence of the Apostle is the fulcrum by which the thought of Jesus gets its purchase historically against this decision of our political pharisaism. The same test in principle is put before our minds and consciences in this question of race that was set before early Christianity, that our religion may be healthy, and that our prophetic insight may not die into moral blindness and apathy. No mean nation is called to organize a root-principle of the celestial order into its life. We can see the estimate which Providence puts on this country in the fact that, despite our sin and apostasy, he still offers to us the supreme privilege and honor of winning back that

principle of the equality of races, and of enthroning it deliberately in our Constitution, after Antichrist has challenged battle around it by tearing it from our charter and traditions, and trampling it under his hoof.

Our duty then is, first, to see that Christianity is vitally interested in this struggle against our Supreme Court, and to feel the solemnity of this fact, that we are not a Christian but a heathen nation, if we suffer the recent ruling to get seated as law over the mind and conscience of this land. And so we are to see to it that the Church sentiment is arrayed against it wherever there is a free Church, a Church founded on the cross and the book of Romans, and not on the curse of Canaan by Noah, and the bills of sale to Abraham of slaves. We are to hate it and to loathe it as atheism and blasphemy. We are to hate it as loyal to our history; hate it from love of the truth which it perverts, and out of reverence to the sainted men whose fame it pollutes in claiming their sanction; hate it as Americans and patriots, for the infamy it brands into the brow of our nation in the regard of foreign lands; and hate it with consecrated passion as Christians, in the feeling that, if the religious sentiment gets bowed to indifference to it, we have, from that moment, a union of Church and State here more revolting than the Russian, and may as well print our Testaments at intervals, with codicils from our national judges, showing what, according to the last

exigency of the slave system, is everlasting truth. Grounded in this spiritual opposition, we are to cultivate the expansive and redeeming forces in our society. In the unconsecrated blood of the country this decision will work like the virus of a rattlesnake. We are to meet it with stimulants, knowing that if the sedative reaches the heart it is death.

The Latin poet, Virgil, has drawn a vivid picture of one of the scenes which hastened the fall of ancient Troy. The noble Trojan priest, Laocoön, denounced the infatuation of his countrymen, when they determined to receive the monstrous wooden horse, stuffed with Greek troops and princes, into the city. He tried every means to rouse his countrymen to a sense of their peril, and at last hurled his spear against the hollow fraud. But, lest his passion might be effective, the hostile gods that helped the Greeks sent two snakes over the sea from Tenedos, with crests dropping blood, and quivering tongues that licked their hissing mouths. They made their way in the city at once to Laocoön and his sons, wound themselves in frightful festoons around their limbs, bound them in a group of agony which sculpture has made immortal, crushed and choked them, and reared their crests and poisonous tongues over the brow of the patriotic priest, whose chaplet was black with their poison and red with his own death.

Thus the church of Troy was silenced ; the ser-

pents nestled safe under the buckler of the goddess in the sanctuary ; the wooden horse was admitted, and that night Troy was in flames.

The snakes of Tenedos are after the Church of America to-day. They are winding around the Bible and the pulpit and the press. We are in the midst of the Laocoön-wrestle between our Christian principle and the sinewy pressure and coil of that slimy sentiment which puts forms of law above its essence, transparent iniquity, with a judge's seal to it, over unofficial truth with God's stamp upon it, which would divorce religion and humanity, though they have been welded to indistinguishable sanctity in the heart of Christ, and would crush out the breath of the New Testament by the constriction of a dozen misinterpreted texts.

If the arms of the Church are not able to throw off these hideous anacondas, that its prophetic spirit may stamp their heads into the dust ; if the parable of the good Samaritan and the spirit of humanity glowing in the fire-drawn picture of the king in judgment, do not rise demonstrably victorious over this literature of hell, we have no Church and no Church sentiment. Jesus is dead, the church spires are his monuments, and Northern Christendom is a graveyard.

Of political methods of resistance this is not the place to speak. I agree with his Excellency that ministers should not mix with political discussions. It is when civilization is at stake, and Christianity is impeached in high places, that they

have the call to speak, and then not for party, but for religious ends.

And so I will pass over political methods to say that, if we are honest in our denunciation of this decision, we must respect the black man, recognize him as a brother, be ready to help him elevate himself in Northern society, plead against the disabilities that fetter him, pay the reverence to him which is due to the victim of arrogant tyranny, and feel that the contempt for him which vents itself in the corruption of the word "negro" to palliate any of the wrongs of his race is conspiracy with the heathenism of this decision we denounce, a public support of it, and a sin against Christ.

And lastly, and for our own souls chiefly, that we may be found contending with the strength of character and by the might of the Holy Spirit against all instituted wrong and against the invisible essence of wrong itself, we must keep our hearts open to charity, and earnest in prayer, and docile to Jesus Christ, that our sorrows and fastings of the spirit may avail in heaven, and that our supplications for our country may be pure enough to win from Infinite Grace more of that life into the land which, while it multiplies the nation, increases the joy.

1857.

XV.

LIVING FOR IDEAS AND PRINCIPLES.

"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." — *Philippians* iii. 7, 8.

THE truth at the heart of this passage is, that St. Paul lived for an idea and a cause. Christ represented to him the sublime fact that God is unspeakable goodness; that he desires to be worshipped, not by slavish and wearisome services, but out of a filial and joyous heart; and that life is offered to men as a condition of spiritual freedom and immeasurable bliss. Whenever the word "Christ" was written or spoken by the Apostle Paul, his imagination was fired with the conception that the love of the Infinite God had been expressed in a human person and a life with which we can come into quickening sympathy; and this fact was so much richer to him, and so much more inspiring, than all the beauty of the world, than all the pleasures and honors of society, that he counted all other things as loss before the glory of believing in it, cherishing it as a hope, and publishing it to the world. He gave

up the good opinion of his nation, the fellowship of his family, the prospect of honor and wealth, and cast in his lot with a despised and persecuted sect, that he might have the satisfaction and the joy of living for a truth that outweighed the world.

I beg you, now, to see how harmonious this law, which the Apostle's life illustrates, is with all the indications in the natural world. See how things are accounted noble just as they intimate to us, or represent and illustrate, principles. A grain of matter is grand when we think that it is under the dominion of the law of gravitation, and publishes it just as faithfully as any planet that whirls in space. A piece of common quartz is worth nothing by market estimates to a naturalist; but tell him that by cutting it to pieces, or by searching it with a microscope, he can detect the secret of the force of crystallization, and how the particles of matter shoot themselves into regular shape and become transparent, and he will prize that piece of common stone more than if it were a lump of gold. A loadstone is nothing other than a common rock to a philosopher, until you intimate that it is alive with magnetic qualities that girdle the globe. A triangular piece of glass, utterly valueless in itself, becomes at once a most precious treasure to the scientific student when he finds that with it he can paint his walls with rainbow hues, and untwist at pleasure the charming tints that are braided into a beam of

light. The philosopher learns, at last, to stand in reverence before the common facts, which we consider empty of meaning, by seeing that there is nothing in the universe that is not intrusted, by the Infinite mind, with some great principle, which it whispers to the reverent student. Sometimes a fossil or a pebble is the clew which leads to a broad system of geological truth.

We ought to see that this law applies with far higher force to men. We ought to see that if a piece of matter is valuable, in the world of truth and science, only by reason of the principles enshrined in it, a human being is to be estimated in no other way than by the spiritual principle he stands for, the moral and vital truth that threads him.

What does a man stand for? This is the question that probes the real value attaching to him; because this shows how faithful he has been to the privilege of his humanity, and how much fellowship he has with God. We are not to ask, as this world asks, "How much is a man worth?" to get an answer in dollars; we are not to ask what the grade of his living is, the splendor of his house, the scale of his expenses, as though we could test in that way his essential value. The spiritual method of finding what a man is worth is to inquire what is the moral skeleton or framework of his career, and what purposes he is living for; to search for the central sentiments he lives by; to knock upon the substance of his soul, and

find whether he rings hollow, or if the music of some everlasting principle thrills out of him.

Every man does represent a principle, either a mean one or a noble one, and by that he is estimated in the spiritual world. How inspiring it is when we see men that are the reverse essentially of those we have been obliged to describe! Now and then you see a human being that is not so much obedient to a principle as the personification of a principle. He is the law of justice walking among us and baptized with a Christian name. You feel not only that he tells the truth, but that he could not articulate a falsehood. Honor is so ingrained in him that the Custom House would shake itself clear of the force of gravitation as soon as he could bring himself to swear to a deceitful invoice. His word is as good as his bond, for both are simply the pledges of his character. His dealing with a man in trade is virtually a sacrament; and though he "promise to his loss, he makes his promise good," because he feels that there can be no loss that will compare with central degradation. Such a man is incapable of putting anything—money or station or ease or fame—in comparison with an eternal verity, such as right, truth, the spirit of humanity. If he is in politics, and the way should be open for him, broad and sunlit, to the White House, he would no more set out upon it than if it were paved with living vipers, if he must tread over the prostrate spirit of freedom in

reaching that eminence, though cheers and music from twenty States should fill his ears on the path. If he has money, he knows that he is not made up of money ; that he is built up of brain, conscience, heart, and will ; and that the only eternal value of his money lies in its being an implement of his nobler nature, — seeds of truth, blessings in poor homes, foundation-stones of institutions that send out warmth into the world's frosty air. If he is your friend, his courtesy is the expression of his inmost feeling ; he is the friend of your nature, not of your purse, house, or dinner-table ; and misfortune only brings him closer to you, because there is less of this world's drapery to keep him from intimate communion with your heart.

Such men count all things as loss for the excellency of principles. They have taken truth, the most sacred truth, into their substance. Their blood is no more the current and treasury of their physical life than the spirit of God, the element of all human virtue, is the life-stream of their souls. They do not simply conform to the moralities and gentilities and proprieties which are the common law of society, but they are truth, kindness, charity, intrenched in flesh, fortified by bone, animating blood, using speech and influence, and wealth perhaps, as signs of their presence and sway.

And such persons, brethren, succeed in life, because they fulfil the privilege of their humanity.

They import and impersonate something noble and everlasting, that makes them practically and visibly the sons of God. And they are sermons to us. We are bound to live in such ways as they do, for an idea, a truth, a spirit. Just as the scientific man is interested in common things for the law they suggest, just as the artist seeks in all common things their beauty, which he tries to copy, you are called, and are bound as moral beings, as Christians, to be interested in your home, your work, your temptations, your money, your means of influence, for the good that is possible in them, that is suggested to your conscience, and that would gleam more plainly before you if you were more faithful in the training of your moral sentiments, more careful to keep them submitted to the eye and breathings of God.

This, therefore, is our chief obligation, — to see where a principle can be brought into any portion of our life that is vacant of it or hostile to it now. Where can the order of conscience be breathed into districts of life that lie lawless? Are there not some dangerous or degrading pleasures that can be swept out of the soul's domain by a will brought up to more constant loyalty? Are there no slothful habits, rusting usefulness away, that need to be corrected, and that can be by the systematic effort to invite and domesticate moral energy in the soul? Is integrity honored and commended as it might be in your business and toil, so that, as a clerk, a mechanic, or a

merchant, your service and your dealings are transparent with the light of fidelity and honor? Is there no way in which your thoughts and imagination can be refined to a more steady or delicate purity; no way in which you can make your relations to your companions bear testimony to a more cordial and graceful friendship; no way open for larger self-denial, so that you may have ampler means and a more earnest disposition to help the needy, and so to spread the light and cheer and charm of charity through your experience; no opportunity for you to stream a sweeter temper through your home? Above all, can you not see how a deeper spirit of personal piety may be diffused through your mind and heart, so that you shall be more grateful for your blessings, more penitent for your sins, more devout towards the Infinite Majesty, more trustful in the Boundless Love?

Who is there of us that, as these questions are asked and flash upon our lives, does not see, in a moment, how poor and coarse we are compared with what we might be, and how near the holiest principles are to our work and our will? Our call is, brethren, to fetch these principles into our daily deeds at any expense, so that our lives will radiate them. We are to count everything we may have to give up, any toil of self-discipline we may have to undergo in that work, as loss and dross for the excellency of their righteousness. Thus we rise into fellowship with Paul. It is

your business and my business to do this work, just as much as it was Paul's to throw aside every hindrance to his devotion to the Gospel, and to give up everything that would make him a less zealous and potent missionary.

It is not abstract principles defended by the mind and published by paper that help or save the world, but principles incarnate, looking through human eyes, using human speech, moving in homes, trading in stores, eloquent in caucuses and senate-rooms, signing subscription-papers, and scattering gold. We are to call them down from their diffusion in the spiritual air, and fortify them by our bosoms and our blood. There is no end to the work and the service we may do in perfecting ourselves, so that celestial ideas and the spirit of the Gospel may live in us, and be published anew as "the Word made flesh." It is said that opaque objects can be charged so thoroughly with electricity that they will become transparent. And certainly common actions may be made to glow with the sparks and stream of divine truth, so that their value will lie in their quality and not their scale.

" All may of thee partake ;
Nothing can be so mean,
Which with his tincture, for thy sake,
Will not grow bright and clean.

" A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine ;
Who sweeps a room as for thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine."

The only use of time is in bringing the heart into partnership with these principles, and thus rising into fellowship with God. As the Emperor Titus said, "I have lost a day," when he could think of no good action he had done during the sun's circuit, we must judge ourselves in the blaze of the fact that every day is lost, according to the heavenly notation, that has not been ennobled and spiritualized by the exercise of some moral and celestial quality, either in restraining passion, or doing something, or giving something, or cherishing some devout sentiment, so that a truth, a principle, has become a more ready guest, through us, in this world of conflict and sin.

We have considered the subject thus far chiefly from the point of duty. But it is not complete until we listen to what it has to say to us from the side of resource. A human being was made to give room to ideas, to stand for them, to diffuse their heat and light from his personality, and also to be supported by them, rejoice in them, and live in their atmosphere more than in that of the world. These are what we need, friends, more than any temporal possessions, these are what make us really rich and noble, and our lot really enviable, — great principles as lights, counsellors, comforts, and companions. What we need in adversity is an idea, as part of our being, intertwined with our feelings, that God is just as much revealed in trials as in blessing; that his goodness is shown in putting our moral fibre to hard tasks

that will make it athletic, and so make us permanently nobler, as the teacher's friendship is shown in putting the scholar to a tough lesson that makes the mind sinewy and wise. With that principle as part of our spiritual constitution we triumph over adversities, because the soul lives with God. When evil seems to gain wider sway, we can be calm and strong if we have the idea, as a broad rich light around us, that God is stronger than evil, and is unspeakably more opposed to it than we are, and completely committed, now and forever, to the good. When our friends die, and when death is beginning to mix its shadows with our own air, we are thrice armed against it, we utterly conquer it, by seeing that there is no death if we have the Christian principle in our souls that this life is the threshold of a great future.

A man without ideas like these, destitute of principles that give a cheering hue to life, and which are part of the substance of his soul, doomed to face the dark problems of Providence at some time, and meeting them only with a soul in eclipse—what difference does it make in his condition to say he has gold, he has a fine house, he has a luxurious table, he has a great name, he has civil power? He is to be pitied; angels see how sad his lot is; Christ mourns for him; God yearns over him, because he is poor, penniless, in his immortal nature, because he does not hold to anything with his mind and heart, because he does not own anything in his personal right, for

the gain and excellency of which he counts all other things as loss.

Consecration, service of righteous truth, is the door to this possession of it as a resource which fills the soul with peace. Paul counted all temporal good as loss for the excellency of Christ in his fidelity, and then he soon learned to see that they were beggarly indeed in comparison with what he gained in spite of persecution. He gave up the prospect of being a priest in Jerusalem, and he saw the world as a temple over which God's sanctity ever broods, and in which every spirit may be a priest. What was the friendship of the rabbis which he yielded to the deeper sympathy with the prophets which he gained? What was the toil of tent-making and journeying which he underwent, compared with the mystic melodies that breathed around the frail awnings of his mortal frame, and the ecstasy in which his new faith poised his spirit above the world? What was the sullen hostility of the whole Roman Empire when he saw how thin were the partition walls between this world and the infinite light, and could look through their alabaster veils to the cloud of witnesses, and the Christ that died for all the world, and God shrouded in the glory of his love, and know that they were regarding him with interest, approval, and joy?

He could not have had these visions in the landscape of his soul, unless he had sacrificed earthly good that stood in the way of consecra-

tion. And we, too, can have such infinite payment for finite loss. Make a principle a guest in your heart, — by denying the worldly side of your nature, by fettering passion, conquering pride, living for something other than luxury, using money for good, drilling the will to loyalty, — and it will become thus an immeasurable gain as a resource to your soul. God bends a boundless and sparkling sky over our heads ; but he offers a deeper heaven, filled with more glorious lights and diviner promise, to all souls that will welcome a principle, go out and pitch their tent in the moral universe, and live here for him.

1856.

XVI.

THE HEART, AND THE ISSUES OF LIFE.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." — *Proverbs* iv. 23.

HOW broad and impressive the declaration is, that life issues from within, from the heart of man! The highest region of religious truth is full of paradoxes. How striking is this, that we are receiving all the time our life from God, and yet what we *are* essentially determines what life is! We are finite and feeble; we cannot create so much as a pebble or a weed; and yet our quality gives color and quality to all that Heaven does for us, so that we re-create the world in our likeness. We have no power to exist of ourselves a moment,—God is the substance of our being; yet we can pervert the life of God, as soon as it touches us, into the life of hell, and it is we that determine the universe in which we exist.

Out of the heart are the issues of life. Each person here is a centre from which the universe radiates. There is a light in each one of you, which, streaming outward, mixes with the exterior

light, and is more important than that in giving the complexion to your world. Your inmost state is felt by the farthest star and by the nearest blade of grass. It stains every object you see, and every fact of your experience. Perhaps it brightens and glorifies everything. Perhaps it reveals to you the terrible yet simple meaning of those words, — "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

In its elements and outward scenery nature is the same to all. Light and night, sun and stars, air and earth and landscapes, offer a common enclosure and background to our existence. But the various impulses and aptitudes for work with which we are born — which press from the very core of our being — diversify the world as widely as if we were distributed upon different globes. To one set of men it is a place to think and learn and grow wise in. Everything God has made is a challenge to their intellectual curiosity. They untwist the light; they analyze the air; they tear up the carpets of the planet and bore into its floors; they weigh the orbs of space; they run their measuring lines across the heavens. The thirst for knowledge, which is their central passion, projects the universe as an academy whose facts are pages to be deciphered, and in which success is to be measured by the wisdom that is gained.

Another finds the world a place to work in. The sun is admirable to furnish light for his labor:

the night fulfils its purpose in giving him rest. How many there are to whom this globe is an ant-hill, where each inhabitant must tug at his burden, that it may be mined and stored and filled up into more subtile and wide convenience for the generations to come!

Others find it a garden of beauty in which the stars are more valuable as blossoms of poetic light than for their astronomic truth, and the air richer for its hues than for its uses, and the mountains grander for their millinery of mist and shadow and their draperies of verdure and snow than for their service to the climates and house-keeping of nations.

Still others see the world as a place to trade in and grow rich,—a gorge between gold mountains, where they must quarry, and crush, and perhaps sift mud for gold-dust, or set up their booth to traffic with the miners, while the swift day lasts, for the bagful to support them during the evening, and to leave to others when they go to sleep.

Or it is a pleasure-ground for giddy or elegant enjoyment; or it is a scene of struggling passions, where the ambitious will must wrestle and push and trample, possibly for a forward position, or a seat of authority and fame.

It is plain, therefore, that our natural bent in the line of work does a great deal to impress a character upon the universe. Even when no moral quality is involved, we see how life gets

coined at our mint, so that the world, God's world, somehow wears the stamp of the die cut into our heart. All this belongs as commentary to the proverb I have taken for a text.

And temperament, natural temperament, has an effect on life that must be considered for a moment in this connection. The Almighty would have to create an intenser sunshine for the grave and melancholy man, if he would make the world seem as radiant to him as it does to a person blessed with an organically cheerful mood. Some people seem to carry extra sheaves of sunbeams in their bosom, and carols of birds, and sweet tints of verdure, which they shed into the air and sprinkle over nature. If a man has a music-box in his heart, the pulse of the sun will seem to beat with it, and the trees to throb and bud with its melody. If his bosom is strung as an Æolian harp, nature will be full of weird and sad cadences.

You know how experience, also, interprets the same principle, even in cases where moral considerations are not prominent. You know how a piece of good fortune brightens the air, how prosperous hours make the globe buoyant, how some impending evil puts the edge of a spiritual eclipse upon the sun as solemnly as the shadow of the moon settles on its burning disc, how suddenly ill-fortune in business will seem to make the very springs of beauty bankrupt, how the sickness of a dear friend turns nature pallid, how the death of

wife, husband, or child will convert all the trees to cypress, and set the music of nature in a minor key, as a dirge or requiem.

All these facts, which belong rather to the margin of our subject, enforce the duty of "keeping the heart." For though aptitudes, temperaments, and moods have much to do with the tone and quality of our life, states have more. A dark moral state stretches a permanent veil of cloud over the heart, that thins and chills all the light, while a mood or a sorrow may sail only like the swift blackness of a shower through our air. And we can do a great deal to control the moral states of the heart; we are responsible for them.

Every person is exposed to some particular vice or passion which strives to gnaw its way into the core of character, to be seated there. You are not responsible for your constitutional exposures, but you are for the treatment you give yourself in view of that exposure. This makes the solemnity of the Scriptural injunction to guard against the "sin that easily besets us." If we do not fight with it, we become possessed by it at last, and our whole experience gets flavored with it. Some one of you may lie so exposed, by constitutional weakness, to envy, that it is your call to keep the heart with all diligence against it. What a pitiable and dreadful thing it is when the heart has become so corroded by that form of selfishness that it cannot feel generous pleasure in seeing the prosperity, the rising position, the increasing happiness,

of those with whom it is associated and brought in contrast! What sickness must infect the bosom, what evil must smoulder in its blood, when the fortune of others, the praise of others, the enjoyment of others, wakens pain in its own fibres, and burns its sensibilities as though wrong had been wrought upon itself; when sunshine that God pours upon another's way darkens its breast, and the bounties that drop into a neighbor's lap start a hideous and malignant hunger in its own soul!

I have not time to dwell upon this sin in any detail. It besets civilized society and threatens Christian natures with its black poison. Strive with it if you are in peril from it; for if you become subject to it, it will pollute the currents of your life. God created the world in unspeakable generosity, and you cannot be in harmony with his life if you have an envious heart. Nature will not be to you, society will not be to you, innocent pleasure will not be to you, what they might and would be if that bitter drop from hell was not hidden in the core of your spirit. You are not only exposed to God's direct judgments upon so hateful a sin, you are not only liable to the savage retributions which envy, by its own natural miseries, inflicts on the soul, but all your life gets desecrated by it, and is re-created as it flows through you with its stamp.

Avarice offers an equally strong and repulsive illustration. If you are tempted morally by the

love of money, and if through your weakness or negligence it becomes supreme in you, your whole life is tinged by the jaundice you have allowed to infect the heart. God's quality is in the world around you ; but your quality is diffused through all that you see and experience. Only the heart that is sympathetic and merciful, only the heart that holds money subordinate to generous uses and service, can know what the gracious stars and the munificent sun and the liberal sea and the bounteous earth whisper to us from the spirit of God ; can know what is the glory of history, what the worth of human nature, what "the unsearchable riches of Christ." The issues of life from your heart shrivel if you insist on turning it into a money-till, and will not bring it into harmony with nature and the Gospel by keeping it a fountain of benefits and love.

Remember that the innermost woe of self-indulgence and intemperate pleasure is the vicious imagination they create and the turbid heart they leave, which, like the troubled sea, casts up mire and dirt to pollute the transparent medium in which God invites us to dwell. When the vice of license becomes despotic in a soul, it soils all the purity of God's art and bounty. The world is clean and lovely as on the first day ; but the impure soul has thickened the light, and virtually turned nature into a wide fen.

Keep thy heart, my brother, with all diligence,

for its state is of unspeakable moment with you. Life comes to all of us from the same Infinite source. Its treasury in nature and the Spirit is identical for the rich and the poor, the evil and the good. But its qualities, so different—we must search our natures for the cause of those. It is one element of water that is distilled by Providence for the refreshment of man. Pure and tasteless, it is tempted by the sunshine out of the sea, and is wrung from cloudy sponges upon the hillsides, to be distributed under ground for the universal need. Yet how variously in taste and wholesomeness it bubbles finally for our using! It gets the quality of the earth; it is penetrated by the influence of the chalk layers, the beds of limestone, the clay deposits, the granite, the mineral floors, the swampy regions through which it filters, and from which it issues into light. Ah! and if a snake has his home at the spring where it bubbles for our drinking, of what consequence is it that it dropped at first cleaner than a seraph's tears upon a mountain peak, and has taken no stain on its passage, if poison drips from that creature to mix with all its pulses at last? "Keep thy heart with all diligence"; for, though all your life flows to you out of God, the venom may be secreted from the passions you nourish to taint all the stream.

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The moral evils we have been treating of, envy, avarice, selfishness, license, only vivify with various

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coloring the one fundamental evil, sin, — distance from sympathy with God, alienation from the heavenly Father, indifference or disloyalty to his will and love. This is our central foe. This is what corrupts the issues of life. This is the serpent at the fountain. Back of all sins is sin. The one comprehensive purpose of life is to bring Infinite grace to bear on that, and drive it from the inmost artery of the soul.

Consider, my brother, how this universe changes hue and expression before you, when once in a while the sense of God comes to you afresh, and for the moment thrills you through and through. You look up, perhaps, into the clear night, and you feel for a season that all those dots are worlds floating on the sea of his power, or, through their light, breaks full upon you the countenance of Infinite life and purity. You are under the spell of some religious eloquence, and you get a glimpse for an instant of the truth of Providence, — what it means that Infinite thought and care embosom and penetrate this whole creation. Your passions are still, your heart is in chord with holy truth, and for a moment the cloud of your ordinary scepticism breaks, and you see the blue heaven of life and love glowing over this world of death, and you know in that vision what it is to believe in immortality. Think, now, of a soul in which these passing moods, to which you have been lifted, are states, — that feels the life of God trem-

bling over all the strings of nature ; that believes in Providence just as firmly as in human experience, in perfect justice just as strongly as in partial wrong, in eternal life as constantly as in bodily death, in final order as fixedly as in confusion now. Is not the world re-born to such a soul ? Has it not found the blessed sorcery that exorcises from nature all that haunts the heart and darkens joy ? Is not nature rebuilt for such a mind into an enduring home ?

It is Christian truths and qualities settled into inward states that do this, — the turning of a few sentences of the New Testament into the life-blood of the heart. And it is sin (not any particular and namable sin, but sin in its essence, — selfishness, unconsecration, love of yourself more than truth and goodness, what the Church means by "depravity of the affections") that keeps you from this state. This it is, more than blindness, lack of evidence, or incompetence of the mind to grapple with such problems.

The first thing to do, in order that such life may issue from your heart, is to get your heart broken. Not because it is totally corrupt, but because it is not centrally dedicated, — because God is not invited and admitted to the inner shrine, to rule thence with his wisdom and purity, so that you shall consciously live for him. This world, with its hard conditions and mysteries, is built for an upper and nether millstone to grind pride out of human hearts, to crush their natural

state, so that, in penitence and humility, God may come into the spirit, and the world seem remade because the soul is regenerate in consecration and the beginning of a filial life. When you throw sin from the centre of the heart to the outside, so that thenceforth, however you may sin, you have the principle of protest, sorrow, and renewal in your soul, by the presence of the Holy Spirit there, — when you are thus dedicated as a temple to the Divine Love, the whole light of the world is religious; your joy is sweetened by piety, your adversities are illumined, your wrongs are tinged with the light of Christ's patience and forgiveness, and you see that the grave is only a step nearer to God.

You are to keep your heart with all diligence, by desiring and praying for this spirit of sympathy with God and allegiance to him. And you are also to "keep" it by living in fellowship with great truths and sentiments. If you have had any seasons or season when you have seen the value and blessedness of a religious conception of the universe and of religious principle, honor that; honor your soul's own witness to sacred realities, by trying to keep in the society of those noble truths and ideas.

Some persons wonder why they do not see more of this sacred meaning, and feel more of this spiritual joy in life, than they do; if religious truth, if the Gospel of Jesus, is so certain a reality. "We have no hostility," they say, "that

we are conscious of, to God and the sphere of spiritual verities. Why, then, does not life present such an aspect and such glory to us?" It is simply because the luxury and cheer of religion are something to be lived up to and lived into. The perception that there is a God, that the Bible is probably true, that the spirit of Christ is higher than selfishness, is highest in history, may be gained, as a transient thing, by thought and by logic; but you must take these truths into your sympathy, live their society so that the materialism of habit will thin away, and the darkness of self and self-indulgence melt, before the charm they shed on the world will appear. And so, my friend, do not ask if you simply believe that God exists, but try to make him more familiar to your mind and heart, — try to feel him in your conscience, in your purest affections, pleading, in the appeals that breathe within you, for a devouter and more loyal life. These are the great truths of the world, and the all-important facts of your life, and by keeping the company of such high conceptions and moods, you are putting yourself in the line of their rewards and bliss. You are to grow into the joys of faith. That is the law. And how can you — how can you? — sweeten life, if you do not and will not try to keep fellowship, though temptation and sloth and the flesh stand in the way, with the supreme realities of nature?

If, therefore, you wish to be serious with this subject that tries to be serious with you, ask your-

selves how much need you have to reconsider and rearrange the habits of your life, before you can keep your heart with all diligence, — what passions you should trample which you now cherish, and what zeal you require in searching for God in nature, in life, and the Bible, that you may find him, and so find rest.

1857.

XVII.

SALT THAT HAS LOST ITS SAVOR; OR, RELIGION CORRUPTED.

"Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." — *Matthew v. 13.*

THIS passage refers primarily to the first disciples of Jesus, and chiefly to the Apostles. How powerfully, with this interpretation, it reveals the prophetic reach and clearness of the vision of the Saviour, and the force of imagination which condenses into one focus a vast amount of truth, and of truth which rays out in various directions! Jesus addressed these words to his disciples, on the threshold of his ministry, in the Sermon on the Mount. The company was gathered in an obscure district of Galilee, and the Teacher said to his chosen disciples, "You are related to the welfare, not of this district simply, nor to this mountain-region of Palestine only, nor to Palestine itself as the limit of your influence, but to the welfare of the world. You are the salt of the earth."

Christ did not say that his truth was the salt of

the earth, but that those teachers were,— his truth embodied or rather ensouled in those men. “The Word was made flesh” in him ; and it was to be by the Word made flesh to some extent in those humble and unlettered persons that redeeming influence, preserving life, was to be diffused throughout the world.

What could have seemed then more unlikely to be true than that broad, tremendous statement? What were they, those first believers in Galilee, husbandmen, fishermen, artisans, knowing, perhaps, scarcely a phrase of the languages of civilization and power, — what were they in relation to the thought, the culture, the power, the fashion, the opulence, the passions, the interests of that generation? But Jesus said that, of all that proud and heaving life in whose expanse they seemed to be mere insects on an ocean, they were the preserving element, — not ephemera on the waves, but the salt of the deeps. And it became true. Think of our dependence on the disciples to whom the Sermon on the Mount was first preached ! If the Apostles had failed, the world would have failed. Christianity has been the world’s life, and the diffusion of it was dependent on the loyalty and truthfulness of the Apostles. If they had lost their savor, after Jesus had passed into heaven, wherewith should the world have been salted? If Peter had been permanently a coward ; if all the twelve had been Judases, ratable on the world’s price-current at

thirty pieces of silver each ; if John, who once wanted to call down fire from heaven on an inhospitable village, had never advanced beyond the desire of revenge ; if Thomas had always been a doubter ; if James had reached no higher ambition than to sit on Christ's right hand, a prominent office-holder in an earthly kingdom of Jesus, — if all the Apostles had fallen in the line of their weakness, and had failed to be channels of the truth and spirit of their Saviour, the world would have perished morally, there would have been no salt for a decaying civilization ; and on the negative side the words of Jesus would have been proved true. How fortunate for us, what a call to devout gratitude from us, that those words, which must have seemed so extravagant and disproportionate at their first utterance in the seclusion of ignorant Galilee, have become true on the positive side, so that we are living in a civilization of which the first Apostles, taking their life from the Saviour, were the preserving salt !

But the passage contains a truth of which the first application to the Apostles is only a small part. If they had failed to be true to their trusts and call, they would have been not simply unfaithful men, but impious and infamous men. The verdict against them in heaven would have been high treason. They would have been fit for nothing but "to be trodden under foot of men." This was so in the case of Judas. He fell from an immense height ; he was chosen to be salt,

and he chose to be tainted; he not only failed to fulfil his duty, but he turned his sovereign opportunity and highest trust into the means of wickedness; he converted salt into poison, and he has given his name to the highest class of crimes. Consummate traitors are branded with it as their severest historical punishment. He has been accounted good for nothing — poor short-sighted man, who might have sat on one of the twelve thrones of the whole moral world! — but to be stamped under the feet of the human race. So valid, brethren, are the words of Jesus Christ.

Peter came near to fulfilling them. He denied his Master; he made oath with curses, too, that he knew him not. He fell; but he rose quickly, and renewed the salt of his character by the tears of his repentance, to become a principle of life to tens of thousands of souls.

Where a man is so connected with others that his virtue must be a public blessing, and his vice or unfaithfulness a public and far-spreading disaster, he must be very careful of his loyalty, for he is exposed to the sweep of this principle uttered first to the Apostles by Him who "spake as never man spake." There is no person who receives more abundant and demonstrative honor than the soldier who is a consecrated patriot, and who is successful in rescuing his country from peril. And the fall of a soldier morally from a position of high trust is one of the most awful instances of sin. No one thinks of peering

closely into the private character of the Duke of Wellington. Few think of trying to make a nice estimate of the private and public worth of Lord Nelson. The private or personal sins or failings of such men are accounted of far less import than with most of us; and not because military and naval glory confounds our perception or seduces our judgment, but because their public service, by their thorough fidelity to their supreme duty, was an immense force of good to millions in their land. In large relations they were the salt of the nation, and they did not suffer it to lose its savor. Whatever private vices they had cast a shadow but a little way; if they had carried a vice in their passions that were related to public life, it would have cast a long, wide, terrible shadow, and none the less although they might have been free from some personal failings that may be detected in them now.

Nobody thinks of asking now about the private or domestic character of Arnold. He may have been benevolent, a kind and tender husband, a friend ready to attest private friendship by sacrifices. Suppose that all this should be proved in his behalf. The qualities, to be sure, would be good; we could not call them anything less or else than good. God would regard them as good, and reward them as such, no doubt. But he was not sent to West Point to be kind to his wife, tender to his children, faithful to one or two personal friends. He was not chosen for that post

by the recommendation of such graces of character. He was sent to be true to a nation, and with the expectation that he would dedicate brain and sword, watchfulness and valor, will and constancy, to an abused and suffering people in the crisis of its fate. He was lifted up to a post where light from him or shadow from him must sweep, not over one home or a restricted circle, but over thousands of square miles, millions of human beings, generations of his countrymen. He chose that it should be gloom. And if he should be proved ten times as attractive a man in the virtues that show themselves on a smaller scale as he can ever be rated, the nation he was willing to betray would not hesitate to stamp him still beneath its feet, as the only fit judgment upon his public crime.

No doubt many of the leaders of the present rebellion are men who are estimable in private relations. They would not repudiate a debt. They would not break an oath. They would not creep into chambers, and, with dark lantern in one hand and dagger in the other, strike into the heart of a sleeping victim before he could wake under the fiendish ray. Alas! how much better for most of them if they had only such guilt to answer for in history and before God! It was obligations by scores of millions that they tore up. It is pledges of honor involving the interests of a continent which they breathed away in perjury. It is a nation's heart they felt for with light and cun-

ning fingers, that they might strike into its tremendous pulse and enjoy the sight of the spouting torrent of life. Let us not try to picture it. Turn away from their work to pray that it may not be completed according to the awful scheme of assassination ; to pray that the land may be saved, that their children may enjoy the fruits of the patriotic service which strives to prevent the consummation of the guilt, and that they may be forgiven of heaven through ample penitence. But let the projected spectacle and the thought of its intended horrors impress us with the importance, in God's sight, of positions where character acts upon a wide moral area, and shapes or mars the happiness and prosperity of millions to come.

Legislators ought to think of this principle thus. If they put their vices into laws they damage a state. A private falsehood, a trick in business, a fraud in a transaction with one person, is a black sin. What is it to corrupt the sources of justice, to put false weights into scales that stretch from Colorado to Syskiyou, to tamper with the rights and prosperity of hundreds of settlements which men hold in trust ? Yet I presume that sometimes the very magnitude of the interests involved blinds a man to the sin of unfaithfulness to them. He does not see that it is proportionally immense. Sometimes a man will endanger the rights of ten thousand people, or fail to enlarge the prosperity of a hundred thousand for whom he is trustee, who could not be

tempted to cheat one man in the same town with himself, or be false to the claims of one client or one ward. No person has the right to a seat in any legislative assembly who is so loosely made in the spirit that he can imagine principles to be less sacred when they reach communities than when they reach persons, and who does not feel the privilege and honor and responsibility of strengthening instead of weakening justice and truth in the statutes and customs of a state. The privilege is vast. It is kindred with the privilege of the first disciples and Apostles. As private Galileans they were endowed with the simple opportunities of fishermen, tax-gatherers, and mechanics. Called out by Christ to represent his truth, they were the salt of the earth, and their fidelity was to be part of the strength and soundness of future centuries. A thoughtful and honest legislator will feel grateful for the privilege of a post where his private conscience may help the enactment of justice and the diffusion of beneficence and the defeat of wrong and the uplifting of light for the benefit of thousands whom personally he can never know. And every hall of legislation is under the blaze and sweep, positively and negatively, of the passage, "If the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men."

I beg you to see the same law of trust in relation to your homes. There are forces for good in

modern Christendom outside of the household. There is the daily school, there is the Sunday school, there is the influence of the Church, there are good books. But the home is the enclosure where the principles are most likely to be formed and the instincts to be pointed towards truth and good. And if that influence is indifferent or wrong, in thousands of cases the season of opportunity is lost. As to the characters of children parents are appointed to be the salt of the earth. And scepticism there, levity there in the home, the unchecked play of passions there in open despite of God's law, the plain and daily enthronement of worldly aims there as though nothing else is substantial, are not only personal sins in a father or mother, but a betrayal of trust, the conversion of a sacred energy into a polluting force. "If the salt lose its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" That is the moan over ten thousand desecrated homes. Wherewith shall character be seasoned? The domestic influence is against the budding soul. Blight is in the dew, bane is in the air, virus is in the sunshine, pestilence is in the soil. How shall the plant grow healthily? Now and then a breeze that is pure, a stream of wholesome light, visits it; but the permanent forces are against it, the forces that should nurture it morally only dwarf or wound. Are you willing that your homes shall come, or be in danger of coming, under this description? One of two kinds your homes must be,—helpful

or hurtful to the rising life in them. If hurtful, no other influence will be so hostile; if you make them winningly helpful, your houses are sacred,—they are churches,—however obscure they be by social tests here, they are part of the landscape of the kingdom of heaven.

But there is another significance in the words of Jesus more general than any we have drawn from the passage, and not less impressive in its instruction and warning. It not only teaches us that great trusts betrayed are the deadliest sins, but it intimates or implies that there is nothing worse than corrupted religion. What a man honestly accepts as a religious obligation or impulse may be so far from religious that it deserves to be trampled under foot.

Some commentators tell us that Jesus made a specific allusion in this passage to a substance which was well known to all who had seen the temple sacrifices in Jerusalem. They say that a kind of bitumen from the Dead Sea was used to sprinkle the meats offered on the altars, called the "Sodom salt," and that when it lost its virtue it was strewn on the temple pavement to prevent the priests from slipping. However this may be, the principle is true that what a man supposes to be religious may, although connected in his thought with services and sanctions of religion, be not only destitute of religious value, but so hostile to the pure religious spirit that it is horrible, fit only to be trodden under foot,—salt of Sodom.

You all know how, on a large scale, in history, perverted religion has been one of the chief curses of mankind. What hatreds have been so intense as those which rival theologies have inflamed? What wars have been so infuriate as those whose banners, on both sides, have borne the same figure of Christ, but set in different lights? What courts have been so thirsty for blood as those sustained by priests for the testing of heresy? "Perverted religion," do we call this? No, brethren. Inverted religion it is. Sin, crime against God and the New Testament, high treason in the spiritual kingdom, is it. Religion has nothing to do with it, but to throw it into shadow, and make it the more heinous. It claims to be part of the altar-service of the human race, but it is the worst infamy. It is a power from the eternal world, but it is from the kingdom of evil, a flame from hell. Whatever tends to it, whatever is in harmony with it, whatever seems to be in kindred with it, in your own heart, quench it, tear it out, trample it down. It is Satanic. Men have said that devotion to the truth of God has led them to such methods of extirpating error, and of keeping the Church or a nation pure. But the deepest truth of the Church is good-will, charity. And a man draws the sword, or unsheathes his bitterest passions, to impose his creed on others, only after he has changed the sovereign "truth of God into a lie."

Such manifestations of malignant passion in

the supposed service of pure Christianity are rarer to-day than they have been. But eager zeal for the offensive prominence of a particular theology or form of worship, with sweeping sneers at other forms of truth and homage, or sweeping condemnation of all other types of belief, is unfortunately not infrequent now. You sometimes meet with Catholics who never raise the question that there can be any saving power or faith outside the reach of their miraculous sacraments. You sometimes meet with High-Church Episcopalians who cannot imagine that the angels or the Infinite One willingly listen to any prayers that have not the rhythm of the English Church service. They seem to imagine that Christ came to supply the materials for a liturgy ; they tell you that not for the world would they go into a building where heretic services are held ; and it is only with a cough or a stammer that they can apply the word "church" to any organization of believers beyond their own communion. So you meet now and then with Trinitarian Christians, of other sects, who speak with the same scorn of a possible title in Unitarians to the Christian name. And I have had the misfortune of knowing not a very few Unitarians, who think themselves representatives of the body and devoted to its interests, that draw their chief delight, one would think, from exposing absurdities in Trinitarian creeds, and questioning the sincerity of any Trinitarian piety.

All this is equally distant from the religious

spirit. This is pride of opinion, passion for a party, sectarianism, bigotry, imagining itself the sacred force and bond of society. A man is not called on to separate himself from one denomination, and to try to attach himself to all denominations, — flitting everywhere and alighting nowhere, — in order to show his freedom from prejudice and largeness of heart. But he must learn that Church order is not religion, sacraments are not religion, conclusions about the Trinity are not religion, criticisms of the Trinity and defences of the Divine Unity are not religion. These are bark and roots and fibre and twigs. Religion is fruit. Peaches cannot grow except on a peach branch and from the juices of that wood. But pears do not require such a stock. And what if God is raising, not peaches only, but plums and grapes and pears also, in the vineyard of the Spirit, and ordains that there shall be different kinds of wood — varying theologies and church-cultures — in order that there may be various kinds of products in the realm of grace? If you belong to the apple-department of the orchard, keep there and try to be as sound and savory as possible. But if you make it your business to vilify the other trees, and to prove that the peaches are heretic and hateful in the sight of God, you prove yourself a worm-eaten apple, a crab-apple; your own juices have lost their savor; what you call your religion is only a sign of your worthlessness, and it is fit only to be trodden under foot of men.

One cannot read the biographies and diaries of consecrated men without seeing — often with terror, too — how full the higher ranges of Christian ambition are of peril to the simplicity of the heart's feeling and trust. I was reading, a few days ago, a statement in a biography of the celebrated Pascal, one of the lights of French literature, one of the clearest thinkers and sincerest devotees the Church of Christ has produced. He was a Catholic and belonged to the order of the Jansenists, and flourished in the middle of the seventeenth century. His whole time was devoted to religious inquiries and meditations, and in order to mortify the flesh, he wore a girdle armed with iron spikes under his robe, which he drove in upon his ribs as often as he thought himself in need of sharp practical admonitions. In his infirmities he was attended by his sister, who was tenderly and proudly devoted to him. But he assumed harshness of manners towards her, to repel her, if possible, from love of him, and argued calmly with her — this profound and noble thinker in other respects — that God has the claim to the whole of human love, and that to set apart any of it for objects that must change and die is folly and a sin! Thus may religious love be corrupted, till it must be called an infection, not a grace; a dreadful disease, not the bounding of health through the soul. The passions of Pascal were not malignant; if they had been, he would have turned by his mistake of logic into a systematic and remorseless

persecutor. But his mistake cramped, if it did not curdle, his heart ; and he believed himself under the dominion of the most exalted principle when he was harboring a parody on Christian love, torturing a spirit that had a right to his sympathy and affection, and upholding a sentiment as divine which was fit, not for the dignified answer of logic, but only to be trodden under foot of men.

So sometimes you see persons in whom religion is the stimulant of self-righteousness. Instead of humbling themselves before God, they count themselves distinguished before God by their offices and offerings of outward piety. They build up a factitious set of duties and services, which have no relation to the substantial work of life and the natural display of character, and they seem to believe themselves worthy in the Infinite sight for their punctilious discharge of them. I do not like to treat this class of spirits at much length, for I do not like to be critical or to indulge in terms of satire. But the danger in this direction is attested by the frequency and the unsparing force of the denunciation of it in the four Gospels. Self-righteousness, pride, — not masked as religion, but the pride of deformed religion, distance from simplicity and natural tenderness of soul, — is the chief evil in the instruction of Jesus. The sins to which the Church is exposed are more terribly condemned by the Saviour than the sins to which the world is exposed ; not because he had a word of toleration for the last, but that he

saw how the first may be more deadly within and more destructive without.

Even prayer, Jesus teaches us, may be an offence, when it is not a mockery, when it is sincere. Read the sketch of the Pharisee and Publican to learn how, when prayer is the natural prostration of humility, or trust, or filial confidence, the confession of a sense of God's nearness, the offering of a sacrifice in submission, or penitence, or devout joy, the asking of good to others, the longing for the widening of good-will and the spirit of Christ over the world, — what more gracious, what more sweet, what more precious as an expression of the soul, as an experience under the Infinite gaze! But when it is the Pharisee's prayer, — "I thank thee that I am not as other men, I fast twice in the week, I pay tithes of all I possess; I am not a half-outcast like this Publican," — however it be veiled or varied in modern expression, whoever offers it or cherishes it, though it conceal itself from the forms of address to God and show itself only in Church pride, estimates of theology, Church annals and traditions, particular Church sacraments and worship, it is from beneath, and it goes downward in the universe, not upward. It is worldliness dressed as piety, exclusiveness aping love, salt that has lost its cleansing virtue and is only bitter, — not of the ocean quality, but Dead-Sea salt, the salt of Sodom.

Do you ask what test you can have to prove the health of your religious spirit, and to show whether or not the heart is under its control?

Perhaps the figure which the Saviour used will help us. Salt, when pure, is good in relation to something else. We do not eat it immediately. We use it to prepare and preserve other articles. Without it the world would die ; but nobody spreads a table with it and invites his friends to a feast of it, or makes a private meal of it. Its office is to penetrate and flavor and save the natural products of the world.

Your religion, brethren, is not a distinct service, the subscription of a creed, the learning of a catechism, the payment of a church-tax, the devotion to a party or ecclesiastical order, the passion for a hierarchy or liturgy or theology ; no, nor distinct spiritual exercises chiefly, for the sake of honoring or propitiating God. Your religion is a permeating element in the natural order and affections and duties of life. It must hide in the spirit as salt in the bread, and show itself in the whole outline and effluence of the nature. It is to make your truthfulness more secure and instinctive, your integrity more firm, your thoughts more pure, your desires more chaste, your friendship more delicate ; your will more loyal to God in the shock and surprises of temptation ; your use of money more charitable and less selfish or careless ; your home more sweet and cheerful ; your care of your children more wise and tender ; your estimate of life as a scene of discipline more and more thoughtful, yet not oppressive and gloomy ; your reverence of God spontaneous, as the power that upholds the universe ; your love

of God an inward brooding emotion, as the Spirit that made you and is ready to fill your heart with grace and peace.

Religion adds nothing, Christianity adds nothing, to the natural duties of the soul and the will. It interprets them, and offers aid to fulfil them under its interpretation. The Church is not for itself, but to help you make life thus sound and sweet. Prayer, written or extempore, vocal or secret, is to assist you thus in life. Theologies, bishops, ministers, biographies, sects, commentaries, cathedrals, Church festivals and fasts, everything that belongs to the outward order of the Church and its history, is to help you for this work and attainment. And whatever cramps your charity, and makes God seem partial, and narrows your fellowship, and arouses passion and bitterness in the name of religion, is fit only to be trodden under foot. The study of the New Testament, of the life and spirit of your Lord, is thus to set you fairly before the work of life, animate you for it, support you in it, and prepare you for wider and deeper life when the veil lifts.

Keep your religion pure. Do not confound it with your theology or with any Church pretension or with pride or dogmatism. Do not degrade it to the level of your passions, and so corrupt life at the springs ; but remember this is the test which distinguishes the true salt from that which has lost its savor : "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him."

XVIII.

LESSONS FROM THE SIERRA NEVADA.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." — *Psalms* cxxi. 1.

IN the Atlantic Monthly for June our great naturalist, Mr. Agassiz, reports an anecdote of the eminent German geologist, Von Buch, one of the founders of that recent and majestic science. Mr. Agassiz, when a young man, was acquainted with him, and knew, by personal intercourse, that the explorer into the mysteries of the earth's formation had the poet's feeling and the worshipper's heart. All great natural phenomena impressed him deeply. "On one occasion," says Mr. Agassiz, "it was my good fortune to make one of a party from the 'Helvetic Association for the Advancement of Science' on an excursion to the eastern extremity of the Lake of Geneva. I well remember the expressive gesture of Von Buch as he faced the deep gorge through which the Rhone issues from the interior of the Alps. While others were chatting and laughing about him, he stood for a moment absorbed in silent contemplation of the grandeur of the scene, then

lifted his hat and bowed reverently before the mountains."

This, brethren, is the spirit out of which the most efficient knowledge grows, this is the spirit which acquaintance with the works of God should ever deepen and feed. I meet you to-night that we may together bow reverently before the mountains that guard the eastern frontier of our State, with whose majesty I have been permitted, of late, to form an intimate acquaintance. Love of nature has its root in wonder and veneration, and it issues in many forms of practical good. There can be no abounding and ardent patriotism where sacred attachment to the scenery of our civil home is wanting; and there can be no abiding and inspiring religious joy in the heart that recognizes no presence and touch of God in the permanent surroundings of our earthly abode.

The great bane of modern life is materialism,—the divorce of spirit from power, order, bounty, and beauty in our thought of the world. We look upon nature as a machine, a play of forces that run of necessity and of course. We do not bow before it with wonder and awe as the manifestation of a present all-animating will and art. Whatever leads us to such feelings towards the universe puts us on the road to Christian faith, helps character, and lifts the plane of the privilege of life. I believe that if, on every Sunday morning before going to church, we could be lifted to a mountain-peak and see a horizon line

of six hundred miles enfolding the copious splendor of the light on such a varied expanse ; or if we could look upon a square mile of flowers representing all the species with which the Creative Spirit embroiders a zone ; or if we could be made to realize the distance of the earth from the sun, the light of which travels every morning twelve millions of miles a minute to feed and bless us, and which the force of gravitation pervades without intermission to hold our globe calmly in its orbit and on its poise ; if we could fairly perceive, through our outward senses, one or two features of the constant order and glory of nature, our materialistic dulness would be broken, surprise and joy would be awakened, we should feel that we live amid the play of Infinite thought ; and the devout spirit would be stimulated so potently that our hearts would naturally mount in praise and prayer.

I cannot but feel that it is a religious privilege to ride, in the long hours of a summer's day, from the vast plain in which they subside, up the slopes to the crest of a mighty mountain-wall. Our thoughts are soon led to the tremendous forces that sleep around us. Over the rolling outworks we pass till, shut in by the bubbles of the plain, we approach the long firm buttresses and commence to conquer their acclivities. The path winds with the tortuous banks of cañons, and twists to overcome steep cliffs, and we look off upon the sharp slopes or precipitous sides of the

opposite heights. Now and then the awful gutter of a land-slide opens its gray desolation, and the immense boulders that once ground their way in thunder through the night storm, with a momentum that makes human artillery seem petty, lie half crushed below, amid the ravage of their wrath. Soon we see a clean-washed cliff that calmly tells us what the anatomy of the globe is thousands of feet below the plains. Higher up a spire breaks through tilted strata, to give us a more intense conception of the energy, ages ago, of the central fire.

A visitor to the mountains toils up the grade which skill has smoothed slowly against the constant pull of gravitation. It is a great achievement if, with noble horses, he can mount eight miles an hour towards the pass, so persistent and despotic is the force that holds the globe compact; and the mountains are trophies of triumph over that force. They sprang to their height under the whip of the internal flame, and there they maintain themselves in spite of the protest of the force that seeks to pull them down. They are not dead mounds of matter. They are nervous tide-lines of tremendous power. The crests of the Alps, the cones of the Cordilleras, the awful wedges and splinters of the sovereign Himalaya, are the cold stiff spray of a power that burst from the planet's breast and still hides there. The perpetual cold tells of heat. The seeming granite permanence is the confession of passion

and unrest. The incalculable weight of the hills is the sign of a fury before which all weight is a toy. Amid such powers we are living. Over such deeps of mysterious wrath our order is built, our life is shaped ; and all this force is in the hand of God. His will is the fountain of it, his thought is the guide of it. What are we before one mountain and its subterranean fire? And yet what is the bulk and weight of the mountain to the mass of the globe? And the globe is calm. It moves even, patient, peaceful in its furious sweep through immensity. And sun and planets, all suns and all worlds, all their weight and fires and speed, are upheld by his spirit, are moved and guided and curbed by the invisible potency of his sovereign will. Truly does the Psalm say : "Thou dost set fast the mountains by thy strength ; being girded with power." Truly did the prophet say : He "hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance ; . . . behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing." The mountains are measures by which we may begin to form conceptions of Omnipotence. They lead us up from matter to mind. They teach faith in invisible force. The words of the Hebrew hymn are still true at the base of the Sierra, as at the base of Lebanon : "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence com-

eth my help. My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

But it is not the power of the Infinite alone that is suggested as we ride up a great mountain slope: his goodness, his bounty, is equally manifest to the open eye. It is very important in our religious education or awakening to obtain and keep healthy and substantial convictions of the love of the Almighty, so that that word shall not represent a puny and pietistic sentiment alone. Whatever enlarges our conception of the opulence of nature, and makes us connect its affluence with the Creative Spirit, increases the possible force upon our hearts of the central doctrine of Christianity, — the love of God.

Mounting from the plains to the heights, we cannot help noticing the variety in the productiveness of nature. Each quality of soil has its peculiar element of nutrition, and supports peculiar products. Each change of average temperature, though slight, is marked by new kinds of flowers and shrubbery. Every gradation, every cranny and chink, is veined, often is bursting, with life or bloom. We go up from the gray hot sweeps or billows of the plain into coolness, into green, into a magnificent forest of fir, into a glorious belt of the sugar pine, lovelier than the cedars of Lebanon, into the regions of pure water and cold foamy cascades, that sometimes show a stream of winding whiteness for half a mile on a desolate cliff, and lastly into the healthful, blazing charity

of the eternal snow! What is the fit condensation into speech of all this good but the language of the Psalm: "Thou openest thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing?" Nature produces nothing. God is the sole Creator. The variety of the productiveness of a mountain slope is a slight measure of his copious bounty. Not a sparrow falls to the ground, not a grass-blade grows, without your Father. Follow up the slopes of a mountain like Chimborazo, in Ecuador, or Illimani, in Bolivia, and it is as if God opened his hand under your eye to reveal the breadth of his bounty. Its base is washed by a tropic sea; its crest pierces the clean cold azure with arctic snow. And between is almost every type of the floral beauty and the vegetable riches of the climates of the earth! This is the exhibition in one picture of the munificence of the Creator. All this is for man, for his education, for his delight, for his food, for his equipment, for his coronation, through the comprehension and the right use of it all, with glory and honor. And then remember that this exhibition is but of one mountain on this little earth. Think of the immense expanse and varieties of worlds that spot the night-fields with climates and scenery and conditions of life so different from ours, and try to imagine then what is the range of the creativeness of God.

Ah, brethren, while there is a mountain in the land that is clothed with green and embroidered

with flowers, say not that the love of God is a mystic sentiment which cannot be reached by the calm and healthy understanding. The overwhelming revelations of it are the difficulty. "Ask now the beasts, and they shall instruct thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee; or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee, and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee." It is when we attempt to bound or define the love of God that our difficulty begins. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."

And at a little distance all this grandeur, all this power, all this fertility, are transfigured into pure beauty. There is no color on the globe comparable with that which robes a mountain at a sufficient distance, however rugged and desolate the near aspect may be. One of the most accurate artistic students of nature that has ever lived, Mr. Ruskin, tells us that one cannot know what tenderness of color is, who has not seen the rose and purple hues of a great mountain twenty miles away. Mr. Emerson, in an exquisite passage of poetry, has expressed and adorned the same fact thus:—

"A score of airy miles will smooth
Rough Monadnock to a gem."

Move off to a distance of threescore airy miles, when the atmosphere is favorable, and what glorious beauty will the line of the Sierra wear! I have seen the vast bulwark thus from

the bank of the Sacramento in the spring, and once from the summit of Diablo, when they seemed, though on the earth, not of it. All their rocks, their gorges, their precipices, their streams, their desolate patches which the earth-avalanches had torn, their cliffs, their forests, their nooks and dells, their tortuous roads, all their bulk and savageness reduced to smooth splendor of color! First, a purple bar of foothills just beyond the dim edge of the immense prairie; then a middle slope of vague and tender green; and then, crowning all, the golden snow (gold at that distance) in an unceasing stretch of two hundred miles! What a vision through the clear air, when we sweep thus the complete physiognomy of their summits,—here a symmetrical peak, there a long ridge sawed into sharp spikes of creamy whiteness, and soon a huge climbing mound of brilliance, showing where the Carson turnpike leads the adventurers after silver, that cannot be polished or frosted to such beauty as sheathes its own tremendous dome!

Next to the Himalaya, in Hindostan, that ridge bears the most noble name of all the mountain-chains on the globe,—“Sierra Nevada.” And when we see it sixty miles off, under clouds that mimic its pinnacles and swells, it shows like a vision from another world, like the street and wall of the New Jerusalem. Only the colors are in reverse order, as befits the reflection of heavenly glory in an earthly medium. First comes

the amethyst, midway the beryl, and on the heights, not at the base, the pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

And all this splendor is part of the bounty and love of God. What a small part indeed of the glory of this one mountain-range we see at the most propitious point of our neighborhood! The Sierra runs along the whole eastern line of our State, nay, it stretches southward through all Mexico and Central America; it is part of the Andes that wall the western coast of the Southern Continent; it ends in the cliffs of Cape Horn, washed by the fury of the cold Antarctic waves; its line is closed on the north in the spires of rock and ice that spring near Behring's Straits. All the way along, from Polar Seas through the Equator to Polar Seas again, it wears such beauty, seen from distant points. The glory of morning, the richer glory of evening, breaks and dies upon it in hues which no artist can ever counterfeit, on every cloudless day. Is not part of the object of this opulence to lead those who see or contemplate it to bow before the riches of God's art and goodness? What if the earth had been sombre in its drapery? What if the eclipse had been our common tone of light? Ah, brethren, let us recognize the Father's goodness in the cheer and joy of the natural beauty, and let us think of the nearer presence of our Maker with solemn delight. He asks us to think of him, not as robed in thunder and awe, but as hidden in light and glory. It

is only now and then that a mountain is wrapped like Sinai. Their drapery is splendor, not gloom.

"Since o'er thy footstool here below
Such radiant gems are thrown,
O, what magnificence must glow,
Great God, about thy throne!
So brilliant here these drops of light,
There the full ocean rolls — how bright!"

We often speak of a mountain-wall. The ancient founders of cities built walls to protect them against foes. The Chinese attempted thus to barricade their kingdom against aggression and intercourse. Riding up slowly the slopes of Sierra, one feels the grandeur of the tremendous barrier that has been upheaved along the western edge of a continent. The range, of which it is part, stretches almost unbroken from Cape Horn to the North Russian territory, nearly nine thousand miles. For some hundreds of miles it runs along the borders of our State, and for hundreds more through American soil in Oregon and Washington.

And yet the deeper and more inspiring thought that visits us as we rise and gradually conquer its "aerial shelves," is that it is not a barrier, in spite of its crags of thirteen thousand feet, and its passes of upreared granite a mile and a half from the level of the sea. There are passages over and through its tremendous ruggedness.

"The mighty pyramids of stone,
That, wedge-like, cleave the desert airs,
When nearer seen and better known,
Are but gigantic flights of stairs.

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“ The distant mountains, that uprear
 Their solid bastions to the skies,
Are crossed by pathways, that appear
 As we to higher levels rise.”

It has been said, as part of the philosophy of history, that “ mountains interposed make enemies of nations, that had else, like kindred drops, been mingled into one.” In our country it is not so. Where the great barriers are upheaved there is really no wall. The Virginia beyond the mountains is one with the life and spirit of the nation. The Alleghanies of Tennessee support a loyal sentiment on both their slopes, and they carry the inspiration of that sentiment through their cool air to Northern Georgia and Alabama. The Rocky Mountains do not lie in the pathway of a loyal national passion, and the Sierras prove no wall against it. Over every mountain-chain, from Aroostook, in Maine, to the heights that divide our bay from the Pacific, one sentiment sweeps continuous, one devotion, one hope, one speech, one prayer. There is no chain of hills or river-bank, or any other natural line or limit, to bound the district of the rebellion, and suggest the propriety of a new nationality, while it offers itself as the bulwark of it. All that might have seemed naturally perilous to the immensity of our republic has been easily conquered. Stages cross the Sierra, and wind up and over the lower slopes of Pike’s Peak, and traverse the region between the sources of the Columbia and the Missouri. It is a line of sentiment only, cutting the tracks of rivers,

that has threatened the nation, and that we must conquer by colonization. Nothing that God has made interrupts our unity. And when the spirit that has subdued the mountains, and hewn passes of easy grade out of their heights for American energy to move through, the spirit of free and honorable toil, the spirit that honors God in honoring man, — when this spirit goes down into the tropic lowlands of the nation, and applies its vigor to them, and recasts the tone of society around them, the nation will again be one ; the hills and the central valley stream will be in harmony, and the one flag of the republic will be supported on every height and every delta, by a common feeling, faith, and aim. By the war and its tendency to extirpate slavery, God is cutting for us this path through the frowning moral barrier that was upheaved by Satan to rupture our social geography and our peace.

But let us turn now to some of the moral lessons which reflection upon heights opens to us.

The mass of the mountains, according to geologists, is very slight compared with the extent of the plain surfaces of the globe. If the Pyrenees were levelled and spread out upon France, the effect would be to make the general level of the country but a rod or two higher ; and the whole matter of the Alps shovelled over Western Europe would raise the land only twenty-one and a half feet.

Yet how would the glory of the lowlands be

lost if the hills were not there from which the pastures, the gentler slopes, and the plains could be seen! There would be a loss not only of the sublimity of the mountains, but of the real beauty and picturesqueness of the level grounds.

The analogy of mountain heights with life seems to me at this point to be quite striking. The amount of genius in the world, in contrast with the vast mass of common intelligence and capacity is very slight. Suppose it were possible to distribute it into an average, — to pour it like pure spirit into the general liquid of lower grade, — the proof of mental power in the mass would hardly be perceptibly raised. But how much of the glory of life, even for the common intellect, depends on the few lofty geniuses of history! How much more value and beauty there is in ordinary human lot because we can rise to the height of a Dickens's sympathy with it, and then look around upon the byways and into the nooks and out upon the plains of our nature! How much more interest there is in history because of the eminent appreciation of portions of the past we may all gain from the intellect and sympathetic learning of a Scott! What dependence we have upon minds like Newton and Herschell, to know anything of the glory of the sky, or upon Humboldt and Agassiz, to comprehend the science and grandeur of the globe! How much less resource and value there would be in our homes if it were not for our ability to go up on the ridges of Shakespeare's

genius, and climb, by the rich books that a few dollars will place on our tables, up to the elevation whence the historians, the artists, and the supreme thinkers have seen our life, and the landscape of eternal truth!

All pure genius, brethren, is beneficent as the mountains. It invites up. God gives its capacity to very few. But the power of appreciating its work and service he gives to thousands of us. The highest genius always comes close to the mass of humanity and blesses it, and mentally we can all have a mountain-range in our life. By cultivating an interest in a few good books which contain the results of the toil or the quintessence of the genius of some of the most gifted thinkers of the world, we need not live on the marsh and in the mists. The slopes and ridges invite us. Our feet may be supported, now and then, above our natural elevation, and we may gain new views, truer relations between objects, grander lights, and a wider horizon of mysterious beauty. By that power of reading which God has endowed upon you, he enables you to say if you will, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help."

And now, going higher still on the grade of imagery, let us see what symbols our subject furnishes for private experience. There are such things as mountain principles and mountain thoughts in the individual life. That soul is in a lamentable condition that lives only on the

flats of worldly and mercenary customs or on the wretched level of paltry pleasures. And there is no soul that must needs live thus ; for in every nature there are districts of higher thoughts, and latitudes of soaring aspirations, in the region of which, if it pleases, the mind may pitch its home. The trouble is that we do not keep company with our own best moods and seasons. Our experience with them is like our acquaintance with the mountains when we seek recreation, — a flying visit in the lull of business, or under pressure of ill-health, — a swift introduction to their glories, forgotten soon after our return.

There are many souls in which God creates mountains anew, every year.

He stirs the deeps of their hearts by some pungent visitations of the Spirit, and straightway they send up aspirations for something better, — holy desires and momentary resolves that tower a great way over the poor plain on which they had lived. But alas ! there is no vigor in them, for they sink back almost as soon as they appear. It is as if nature should heave up, time after time, a summit like Diablo, or Tamal Pais that guards the Golden Gate, or one of the pinnacles of the Sierra, and see it fall back continually into thin liquid deeps. The true soul has these visitations from God, these moral upheavals of its own essence, and they stiffen at once into principles ; they become lasting landmarks ; and from their summits and sides the freshening streams that make their lives fruitful flow down.

But the principal trouble with people in Christian lands is that they will not practically recognize the high experiences and upland truths that do stand in the background of their souls. They shut their eyes to them ; they keep their faces from them. They lay out the little plantation of their experience in some secluded nook of a valley, or hedged by thick groves of social custom, and try to forget that there is anything great and high for which life is given and towards which it should struggle. Comfort, pleasure, and self are the objects of their activity, and they keep themselves from looking after any higher plane of experience.

Most of us that fail, fail in this way. We cannot be brought to say, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." Those hills do stand amid the scenery of our spirits, — we know they do, — the mighty summits of moral truth, the elevations we have stood on in some great season of vision, the spiritual laws of Jesus Christ which our souls cannot deny, the examples of pure devotedness which our memory has appropriated, — there they stand within the boundary of our own consciousness, and we will not live upon their slopes or within their range. We burrow in the glens, or we huddle together out upon the moors, and then, sometimes, we wonder that there is no more grandeur in life, and that its prospect is so poor.

No grandeur can there be in life, no noble prospect can stretch out before us, unless we

pitch the tent high up, or unless we keep the lofty places of our spiritual estate as peaks of vision for frequent visits. Socrates lived high up, and when he was in doubt or perplexity he went up higher to see how life looked from the lonely summit with its keen pure air. Paul lived high up, and he walked by the sight granted to him on the noble eminences. Jesus dwelt high up. We read that, at times, he sent the disciples away and retired into a mountain apart to pray, and when the evening was come he was there alone. The mountain to which he retired was inward more than outward. It was not only in some rare evening hours that he secluded himself thus. More than any other son of man he dwelt on the heights, and saw the glorious lights of God's love on the plains, and the wide-arching, all-embracing, heaven-embosoming nature.

We are not to live outside the world, but in it, feeling its passions, working in its interests, striving to do our duty in its trials. And yet large districts of our life and feeling should be above the world, on the Sierra heights from which the world and our toil and our home cares and our surroundings look noble, precious, bathed in light.

Believe, O soul, that art placed in this mysterious and glorious universe, that God formed thee from his Spirit for no mean purpose, but for a destiny nobler than thy highest aspirations have pointed to. Believe in the best thoughts and whisperings that visit thy heart. If thou dost

catch at times some gleams of the divinings of charity, of the glory of sacrifice, of the grandeur of faith, of the sky-piercing power of prayer, like mountain-peaks jutting through fogs, or slopes afar off in the horizon light, believe in them with more enthusiasm than in the stupid dust of the beaten roads ; make your home where they will inspire you, and where you can easily ascend their slopes, and see the world from a higher point, and feel the everlasting presence of God. Believe in them, for they are the mountain-principles and altar-piles of life. Breathe the air that is freshened on their heights. Drink of the streams that flow fresh from the channels in their sides. And in every season of doubt, temptation, or despair, lift up thine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh thy help.

1863.

XIX.

LIVING WATER FROM LAKE TAHOE.

"Let us go over unto the other side of the lake." — *Luke* viii. 22.

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." — *Revelation* iv. 11.

WHEN one is climbing from the west, by the smooth and excellent road, the last slope of the Sierra ridge, he expects, from the summit of the pass, which is more than seven thousand feet above the sea, higher than the famous pass of the Splugen, or the little St. Bernard, to look off and down upon an immense expanse. He expects, or, if he had not learned beforehand, he would anticipate with eagerness, that he should be able to see mountain summits beneath him, and beyond these, valleys and ridges alternating till the hills subside into the eastern plains. How different the facts that await the eye from the western summit, and what a surprise! We find, on gaining what seems to be the ridge, that the Sierra range for more than a hundred miles has a double line of jagged pinnacles, twelve or fifteen miles apart, with a trench or trough be-

tween, along a portion of the way, that is nearly fifteen hundred feet deep if we measure from the pass which the stages traverse, which is nearly three thousand feet deep if the plummet is dropped from the highest points of the snowy spires.

Down into this trench we look, and opposite upon the eastern wall and crests, as we ride out to the eastern edge of the western summit. In a stretch of forty miles the chasm of it bursts into view at once, half of which is a plain sprinkled with groves of pine, and the other half an expanse of level blue that mocks the azure into which its guardian towers soar. This is Lake Tahoe, an Indian name which signifies "High Water." We descend steadily, by the winding mountain-road, more than three miles to the plain, by which we drive to the shore of the lake; but it is truly Tahoe, "High Water." For we stand more than a mile, I believe more than six thousand feet above the sea, when we have gone down from the pass to its sparkling beach. It has about the same altitude as the Lake of Mount Cenis (6,280 feet) in Switzerland, and there is only one sheet of water in Europe that can claim a greater elevation (Lake Po de Vanasque, 7,271 feet). There are several, however, that surpass it in the great mountain-chains of the Andes and of Hindostan. The Andes support a lake at 12,000 feet above the sea, and one of the slopes of the Himalaya, in Thibet, encloses and upholds a cup of crystal water, 15,600 feet above the level of the Indian

Ocean, covering an area, too, of 250 square miles. I had supposed, however, that within the immense limits of the American Republic; or north of us on the continent, there is no sheet of water that competes with Tahoe in altitude and interest. But in Mariposa County of our State there are two lakes, both small, — one 8,300 feet, and the other 11,000 feet, — on the Sierra above the line of the sea.

To a wearied frame and a tired mind what refreshment there is in the neighborhood of this lake! The air is singularly searching and strengthening. The noble pines, not obstructed by underbrush, enrich the slightest breeze with aroma and music. Grand peaks rise around, on which the eye can admire the sternness of everlasting crags and the equal permanence of delicate and feathery snow. Then there is the sense of seclusion from the haunts and cares of men, of being upheld on the immense billow of the Sierra, at an elevation near the line of perpetual snow, yet finding the air genial, and the loneliness clothed with the charm of feeling the sense of the mystery of the mountain heights, part of a chain that links the two polar seas, and of the mystery of the water poured into the granite bowl, whose rim is chased with the splendor of perpetual frost, and whose bounty, flowing into the Truckee stream, finds no outlet into the ocean, but sinks again into the land.

Everything is charming in the surroundings of the mountain lake; but as soon as one walks to

the beach of it, and surveys its expanse, it is the color, or rather the colors, spread out before the eye, which hold it with the greatest fascination. I was able to stay eight days in all, amidst that calm and cheer, yet the hues of the water seemed to become more surprising with each hour. The lake, according to recent measurement, is about twenty-one miles in length, by twelve or thirteen in breadth. There is no island visible to break its sweep, which seems to be much larger than the figures indicate. And the whole of the vast surface, the boundaries of which are taken in easily at once by the range of the eye, is a mass of pure splendor. When the day is calm, there is a ring of the lake, extending more than a mile from shore, which is brilliantly green. Within this ring the vast centre of the expanse is of a deep, yet soft and singularly tinted blue. Hues cannot be more sharply contrasted than are these permanent colors. They do not shade into each other; they lie as clearly defined as the courses of glowing gems in the wall of the New Jerusalem. It is precisely as if we were looking on an immense floor of lapis lazuli set within a ring of flaming emerald.

The cause of this contrast is the sudden change in the depth of the water at a certain distance from shore. For a mile or so the basin shelves gradually, and then suddenly plunges off into unknown depths. The centre of the lake must be a tremendous pit. A very short distance from

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where the water is green, and so transparent that the clean stones can be seen on the bottom a hundred feet below, the blue water has been found to be fourteen hundred feet deep ; and in other portions soundings cannot be obtained with a greater extent of line.

What a savage chasm the lake-bed must be ! Empty the water from it and it is pure and unrelieved desolation. And the sovereign loveliness of the water that fills it is its color. The very savageness of the rent and fissure is made the condition of the purest charm. The lake does not feed a permanent river. We cannot trace any issue of it to the ocean. It is not, that we know, a well-spring to supply any large district with water for ordinary use. It seems to exist for beauty. And its peculiar beauty has its root in the peculiar harshness and wildness of the deeps it hides.

Brethren, this question of color in nature, broadly studied, leads us quickly to contemplate and adore the love of God. If God were the Almighty chiefly, — if he desired to impress us most with his omnipotence and infinitude, and make us bow with dread before him, how easily the world could have been made more sombre, how easily our senses could have been created to receive impressions of the bleak vastness of space, how easily the mountains might have been made to breathe terror from their cliffs and walls, how easily the general effect of extended landscapes

might have been monotonous and gloomy! If religion is, as it has so often been conceived to be, hostile to the natural good and joy which the heart seeks instinctively, — if sadness, if melancholy, be the soul of its inspiration, and misery for myriads the burden of its prophecy, — I do not believe that the vast deeps of space above us would have been tinted with tender azure, hiding their awfulness; I do not believe that storms would break away into rainbows, and that the clouds of sunset would display the whole gamut of sensuous splendor; I do not believe that the ocean would wear such joy for the eye over its awful abysses; I do not believe that the mountains would crown and complete the general loveliness of the globe.

I love the Quaker simplicity and calm. The Quaker conception of life and worship is part of the protest of the Spirit against errors and poverty in the Church. But God is not an infinite Quaker, though he is the infinite Friend. The world is not clothed with russet, and the flowers are not gray, and the winds are not forbidden to play on the forest harps. I bow to the strength of Calvinistic character, and its service in the education of the human race in the rugged resistance to tyranny and the rugged assertion of the holiness of God. But nature is not Calvinistic in color, and the tone of her landscapes is not that of the pictures of Salvator Rosa, as it would be if the Genevan theology represented the central truth of the Spirit. I know how much devotion to truth

and how much self-sacrifice are represented by the cowl and girdle of the friar and by the simple bonnet of the nun. But there is only here and there a barren waste that wears the drapery of the monastery; the harmonies of natural beauty run far up into the chords of cheer and joy.

The world is strangely garnished by the Spirit if the truth of the Spirit is gloomy and ascetic. The color of the world is part of the Gospel of the world. It is an utterance of love; it is a prophecy of grace. God hides his power and veils his awfulness in opulent beauty; and the most ragged and desolate wastes are chosen to display the rarest beauty. Think of the mountain precipices and crests as illustrating this principle. We call them utterly barren. We think of them as obstacles and hindrances to human power and purposes. But think of the loss to human nature if the summits of Mont Blanc and the Jungfrau could be levelled, and their jagged sides, sheeted with snow and flaming with amethyst and gold, should be softened by the sun and tilled for vines and corn! Pour out over them every year all the wine that is wrung from the vineyards of Italy and France, and what a mere sprinkling in comparison with the floods of amber, of purple, and of more vivid and celestial flames with which no wine was ever pierced, that are shed over them by one sunrise, or that flow up their cold acclivities, contrary to the law of gravitation, at each clear sunset! These are the

crops which the intellect and heart find waiting and waving for them, without any effort or care of mortal culture, on the upper desolation of the hills.

“ So call not waste that barren cone
Above the floral zone,
Where forests starve ;
It is pure use ; —
What sheaves like those which here we glean and bind
Of a celestial Ceres and the muse ? ”

The flowers of nature do nothing to robe the globe in splendor in comparison with the rocks and snows of the uncultivated hills. God chooses the awful things to show off his tenderness. Is not this a theological fact and lesson as well as a fact of science ? Indeed, the most tender influence that we are acquainted with in nature flows from the utmost desolation that we know anything about. I mean the full moonlight. How soft, how soothing, how kindly, how patient, how pitiful, it seems ! Yet science tells us of nothing so blasted, so terrible, as the moon itself. Sahara on this globe is almost a garden to it. The sagebrush plains between the Sierra and Salt Lake are a conservatory in contrast. There are pits in it nearly twenty thousand feet deep. There are mountains of scarred, scorched stone on it almost as high. There seems to be no water on its surface and no air swathing its frightful solitudes. One astronomer imagined that it was the hell of our planet. And yet perhaps its light is the more soft and tender to us because of this barrenness.

One of its chief uses, probably, is to publish the graciousness of the Infinite to our eyes and sentiment. Compassion and love stream to us out of the sky from the bosom of seeming terror. So God swathes his power with grace, and by light and color tells us that he is not the Almighty simply, but the Almighty Father.

And the color of the lake is a word from this natural Gospel. It covers the chasms and wounds of the earth with splendor. It is what the name of the lovely New Hampshire lake, Winnipiseogee, indicates, "The Smile of the Great Spirit."

And this color is connected with purity. The green ring of the lake is so brilliant, the blue enclosed by it is so deep and tender, because there is no foulness in the water. The edge of the waves along all the beach is clean. The granite sand, too, often dotted with smooth-washed jaspers and garnets and opaline quartz, is especially bright and spotless. In fact, the lake seems to be conscious, and to have an instinct against contamination. Several streams pour their burden from the mountains into it; but the impurities which they bring down seem to be thrown back from the lip of the larger bowl, and form bars of sediment just before they can reach its sacred hem. Dip from its white-edged ripples, or from its calm heart, or from the foam that breaks over its blue when the wind rouses it to frolic, and you dip what is fit for a baptismal font,—you dip purity itself.

There is not a soul on the earth, probably, that is so pure, through grace, as this mountain goblet is by nature. A heart that rejects evil so spontaneously, a heart whose agitation is so clear, a heart whose joy is so unstained, would be a heart that had attained perfection. It would be fit for heaven; nay, it would be in heaven wherever it might dwell. We must look for such spirits only in the dwellers of the upper and calmer world, so far are we yet, on this earth, the most of us, the best of us, from reaching the level of nature! It is only as we are pure that we are in accord with nature, and none of us are pure enough to be in full harmony with it. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest; whose waters cast up mire and dirt." But it is only the thin shore-waves of the stormy sea that cast up uncleanness; its deeps in the tempest throw up no scum. The heart of man is more corrupt than any figure from ocean storms can express. And the purity of a lily's leaf, of a tree's robe of blossoms, of the light of a star, of the sunset radiance on mountain snow, has never yet been reached in any character save his who "was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin."

This purity of nature is part of the revelation to us of the sanctity of God. It is his character that is hinted in the cleanness of the lake and its haste to reject all taint. It is his character that is published in the spotless heavens and the unsoiled snow and the glory of morning on mountain-

peaks. The purity of nature is the expression of joy, and it is a revelation to us that the Creator's holiness is not repellent and severe. God tries to win you by his Spirit, which clothes the world with beauty, to trust him, to give up your evil that you may find deeper communion with him, and to recognize the charm of goodness which alone is in harmony with the cheer and the purity of the outward world.

I must speak of another lesson, connected with religion, that was suggested to me on the borders of Lake Tahoe. It is bordered by groves of noble pines. Two of the days which I was permitted to enjoy there were Sundays. On one of them I passed several hours of the afternoon in listening, alone, to the murmur of the pines, while the waves were gently beating the shore with their restlessness. If the beauty and purity of the lake were in harmony with the deepest religion of the Bible, certainly the voice of the pines was also in chord with it.

The oracles of Greece are connected with the oak. And the lightness, the gayety, the wit, the suppleness, of the Greek mind find in the voice of the oak their fit representatives; for the oak, though so stubborn and sinewy in its substance, is cheery and gay in its tone when the wind strikes it. But the evergreen trees, though so much softer in their stock, are far deeper and more serious in their music; and the evergreen is the Hebrew tree. The Cedar of Lebanon is the tree

most prominent when we think of Palestine and the clothing of its hills. As I lay and listened to the deep, serious, yet soft and welcome sound of those pines by the lake shore, I thought of the inspiration of old which had wakened such lasting and wonderful music from the great souls of Israel. When we want knowledge or the quickening of intellect, we enter the groves of Greece; when we would find quickening, when we would feel the deeps of the soul appealed to, we enter the deeper and more sombre woods of Palestine. The voice of the pine helps us to interpret the Hebrew genius. Its range of expression is not so great as that of the oak or the elm or the willow or the beech, but how much richer it is and more welcome in its monotony! How much more profoundly our souls echo it! How much more deeply does it seem to be in harmony with the spirit of the air! What grandeur, what tenderness, what pathos, what heart-searchingness in the swells and cadences of its "Andante Maestoso," when the wind wrestles with it and brings out all its soul!

So the Hebrew stock was formed by Providence to yield a richer tone, a deeper music, naturally, than any other stock could give forth. And out of these Moses towers like a mighty pine, and David as a giant cedar, and the author of Job as a stalwart fir, and Jeremiah as a tall, sad hemlock, and Isaiah as a stately arbor-vitæ, to pour out such strains as never before had been wakened for mortal hearing by the Spirit's breath.

In the Twenty-third Psalm we hear the tender whisper of the air in a pine; in the Ninetieth, the strong autumn breath through its branches; in the Eighteenth the trumpet of tempest blows blast after blast through its boughs, and bends its trunk while it roars with sublime passion. We cannot tell in the forest how much of the tone we hear is of the wind and how much of the tree. Neither can we tell in the great passages of the Bible what proportion of the music is of God and what proportion is of man. Those lofty souls were visited by inspiration. Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. But it was their faculties, their spirits, that were thus moved as branches by the breeze; it was men that spake, we must remember; and their quality, their personality, their limitations, as well as the grandeur and veracity of the Spirit, was in all their utterance, and breathes from their pages still.

I read under the pines of Lake Tahoe, on that Sunday afternoon, some pages from a recent English work that raises the question of inspiration. Is the Bible the word of God, or the words of men? It is neither. It is the word of God breathed through the words of men, inextricably intertwined with them as the tone of the wind with the quality of the tree. We must go to the Bible as to a grove of evergreens, not asking for cold, clear truth, but for sacred influence, for revival to the devout sentiment, for the breath of the Holy Ghost, not as it wanders in pure space,

but as it sweeps through cedars and pines. No book is so deep, so rich, so tender, so awakening as the Bible after the freest criticism has been expended upon it. Nothing can take the tone out of it. It will be as true, as deep, as uplifting, to the hearts of centuries to come, however cultured, as the voice of the pines will, in future ages, be the deepest natural music that the human ear can receive.

And now that the evergreens of the lake shore have carried us, by one law of association, to Palestine and the Bible, let me ask you to bear in mind, further, that the shore and waves of a mountain lake are connected forever with the deepest religion of the Bible and of the world. The sea of Galilee, as it is often called in Scripture, is a lake, its true name being "the lake of Gennesareth." The earliest ministry, and many of the most impressive incidents of the experience of Jesus, are associated with it. The Mount of the Beatitudes is not far off from its bank. Capernaum was on its shore. Magdala also, where one of the Biblical Marys lived, and from which our word Magdalen is derived, was in part washed by its waves.

When we walk by the bright sand of Tahoe, and see the fishermen's nets which have just disgorged their beautiful prey, we think how the Christian Church began; we think of one walking on the beach of a smaller lake, and calling Andrew and Philip, and Simon Peter and James

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and John, from their rude toil, to be "fishers of men." And as we look upon the unlettered men that earn their bread by the fisheries of Tahoe, we ask ourselves again, what must have been the power in the soul of Jesus that has caused the great cathedrals of the world to rise in honor of craftsmen by nature, not distinguished from those who ply their calling under the shadows of the Sierra? We sail out upon our inland lake, and we notice, around one lovely cove of it, a farm on which grain is just lifting its prophecies of green. And we think then of the mystic crop that has sprung up from the seeds scattered on the borders of the lake of Galilee, when Jesus watched the sowing and spoke his parable. The farmer that sowed that day expected his harvest from that very soil in the early summer. It has sprung up a million fold, in hearing hearts of every race and century. We enjoy the beauty of some of the wild-flowers of the neighborhood, in a visit to our mountain gem; and the thought comes to us of the lily-text from which, near the lake of Galilee, the deepest sermon of the Gospel was unfolded. We sail out upon our sheet of water when it is placid, and there is hardly breeze enough to fill the sails. Suddenly a flaw from a cold snowy cañon strikes us, and crowds the vessel into peril. I was out in one of them in a little boat, that could scarcely live in the quick turbulence of the water. And we think of him who slept in the hinder part of a boat on a pillow in

such a tempest, and who arose and rebuked the lake billows from a divine inward calm, saying simply, "Peace, be still!" We look across the water to cliffs of bare rock opposite belonging to another Territory, and we remember that it was on the other side of Gennesareth, amid the desolation of the mountains on the east, that the demoniacs were healed by the potent pity of Christ; and then we think of the more wonderful miracles his Spirit has wrought in these latter years in healing the maniac mind and restoring it to friends and home. We sail out upon the lake at night, and the scene disposes us to read properly the story of his walking on the waves to the terrified disciples,—symbol of the light and comfort which the visit of Christ has brought in countless instances to hearts tossed on the billows of affliction. We look at a distant shore in the early morning, and we think of the last meal of the Saviour with his Apostles. "For "the Last Supper" was not the last meal. This was a morning repast, after the resurrection, on the shore of the lake of Gennesareth. Peter had returned to his occupation as fisherman in Galilee, when the Crucifixion took place in Jerusalem. He was in his boat on the lake by the bank of which he was first called, when just after dawn a voice came to him from one standing on the shore. John was with him in the boat, and recognized the tone and accents of Christ. Peter girt his fisher's coat about him, plunged into the lake,

and swam to land, about three hundred feet distant. Their Lord had already prepared a fire of coals on which fish was broiling for them ; and on the borders of the lake at sunrise, Simon Peter, and Thomas, and Nathanael, and James, and John, and two others whose names we know not, partook of the bounty of the risen Christ, and heard the question recorded for us in the closing chapter of St John, — “Simon Peter, lovest thou me?” The answer came, “Thou knowest that I love thee.” Then the answer, which shows how all thoughts of personal honor were put away even from the triumphant Son of God, “Feed my sheep!”

The Jewish Rabbis had a tradition which they expressed thus: “Seven lakes have I created, saith the Lord; but out of them all I have chosen none but the lake of Gennesareth.” How have these words been fulfilled, in ways of which the Rabbis never dreamed. It is the chosen lake of Providence. Its dimensions are not large. It measures only thirteen miles in length by six in breadth. It is nothing in size, and hardly in charm, contrasted with Lucerne or Como, Maggiore or Lugano. But it is the most sacred spot of the world. It does not lie high up over the ordinary homes of men. Nay, it is in a strange depression on the globe. It is more than six hundred feet below the level of the sea. Yet it is the fountain-head of a living water that has flowed equally to palaces and huts, and that has quenched a thirst

in souls of all conditions beyond the power of this world's wine. Gennesareth has been at once the fountain-head and the baptismal font of the globe. The truth that first fell upon its shores has cast a glory, by association, upon all other inland lakes, and indeed has illumined all nature. We understand and appreciate other lakes, only as we have in our hearts something of the spirit that was taught there.

In my Sunday musing by the shore of our lake, I raised the question, — Who were looking upon the waters of Tahoe when Jesus walked by the beach of Gennesareth? Did men look upon it then? and if so were they above the savage level, and could they appreciate its beauty? And before the time of Christ, before the date of Adam, however far back we may be obliged to place our ancestor, for what purpose was this luxuriance of color, this pomp of garniture? How few human eyes have yet rested upon it in calmness, to drink in its loveliness! There are spots near the point of the shore where the hotel stands, to which not more than a few score intelligent visitors have yet been introduced. Such a nook I was taken to by a cultivated friend. We sailed ten miles on the water to the mouth of a mountain stream that pours foaming into its green expanse. We left the boat, followed this stream by its downward leaps through uninvaded nature for more than a mile, and found that it flows from a smaller lake, not more than three miles in cir-

cuit, which lies directly at the base of two tremendous peaks of the Sierra, white with immense and perpetual snow-fields. The same ring of vivid green, the same centre of soft deep blue, was visible in this smaller mountain bowl, and it is fed by a glorious cataract, supported by those snow-fields, which pours down in thundering foam, at one point, in a leap of a hundred feet to die in that brilliant color, guarded by those cold, dumb crags.

Never since the creation has a particle of that water turned a wheel, or fed a fountain for human thirst, or served any form of mortal use. Perhaps the eyes of not a hundred intelligent spirits on the earth have yet looked upon that scene. Has there been any waste of its wild and lonely beauty? Has Tahoe been wasted because so few appreciative souls have studied and enjoyed it? If not a human glance had yet fallen upon it, would its charms of color and surroundings be wasted charms?

No, brethren; we must test uses in this universe by a higher thought. Though no form of secular service could be won out of Lake Tahoe, it would fulfil a noble and glorious purpose if it gave sacred pleasure to human visitors. And though no human eyes should ever look upon it, it would serve a holy purpose, as a gem of the Divine art, by giving pleasure to the Almighty. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for

thy pleasure they are and were created." The Infinite mind and art rejoices in the glory of his creations. Is our poor appreciation the measure of his intention or success in the wondrous order of the heavens, the glory of the sea, the magnificence of mountain-peaks by sunset and dawn? No. It is to express the fulness of his thought, the overflow of his art, the depth of his goodness, and to enjoy the expression of it, that God compacts the globes in space, and adorns them with splendors like the Himalaya and Andes, and sprinkles upon them the brilliance of lakes and seas, and binds them into mighty harmonies, and beholds them obey his central will.

Where we discern beauty and yet seclusion, loveliness and yet no human use, we can follow up the created charm to the mind of the Creator, and think of it as realizing a conception or a dream by him. He delights in his works. To the bounds of space their glory is present as one vision to his eye. And it is our sovereign privilege that we are called to the possibility of sympathy with his joy. The universe is the home of God. He has lined its walls with beauty. He has invited us into his palace. He offers to us the glory of sympathy with his mind. By love of nature, by joy in the communion with its beauty, by growing insight into the wonders of color, form, and purpose, we enter into fellowship with the Creative art. We go into harmony with God.

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By dulness of eye and deadness of heart to natural beauty, we keep away from sympathy with God, who is the fountain of loveliness as well as the fountain of love. But the inmost harmony with the Infinite we find only through love, and the reception of his love. Then we are prepared to see the world aright, to find the deepest joy in its pure beauty, and to wait for the hour of translation to the glories of the interior and deeper world.

1863.

XX.

THE COMET OF JULY, 1861.

"And there appeared another wonder in heaven; . . . and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven." — *Revelations* xii. 3, 4

I AM glad at every new temptation to consider in the pulpit and the Church the wonders and laws of modern astronomy.

Does it ever occur to you, brethren, how we waste truth? Have you ever felt what a sad thing it is that so little of the vast accumulation of inspiring knowledge should reach our deepest, our religious sentiments, to kindle and feed them? The most certain knowledge which men now hold is that which is gathered from the sky. Astronomy, dealing with objects thousands of millions of miles away, and with forces that rule through limitless space, is the most symmetrical and firm of all the structures of science which have been reared by the human mind. Immeasurably more than David could have known, the heavens, as Herschel reads them, declare the glory of God. Yet how seldom do we think of the splendors and harmonies which a modern book of astronomy unveils as part of God's appeal to our wonder;

how seldom does the solemn light from the uppermost regions of immensity, the light of nebulae which science has broken up into heaps of suns, converge upon a human soul with power enough to stimulate devout awe and make the heart bend before the Creator of the universe !

When a new wonder breaks from the depths of the sky on our vision, we ought to turn the admiration or joy into which we have been startled to some permanent benefit, by seeking through its aid a clearer comprehension of the grandeurs of the heavens, which everybody can understand, or by a deeper response of the devout sensibilities to the glories we had slighted.

Let the strange fire which burst with beauty upon our northern heavens last week, and which is now fading swiftly from sight, be the means of instructing us more seriously in the wisdom of His providence who "telletb the number of the stars and calleth them all by their names."

This last passage is from the Bible. It is singular that the Bible makes no allusion to comets. It is very rich in astronomical passages and imagery. Ancient literature cannot compare for a moment with the prophets, the Psalms, and the Book of Job, in the majesty and gorgeousness of the poetry connected with the vastness of the heavens and the order of its lights. But not once is any of the wild fires that rush across the arch of night depicted in its pages.

There must have been many splendid and as-

tonishing comets seen in the Hebrew sky during the period in which the richest books of the Old Testament literature were written, for it is a period including several centuries; and what makes the silence more striking is, that in ancient times comets excited great dread and superstitious fears as signs of disasters, or of the fierce anger of heavenly powers. But the Hebrew imagination, which loved the vast, the stormy, the vague in nature as a suggestion of the Infinite, never touched the mystery of these corsair-lights among the calm stars; never used them as portents of evil to nations hostile to the holy laws; never conceived them as swords in the hand of Jehovah to punish a guilty heathen kingdom or smite a rebel Hebrew state. The order and customs of the heavens are reflected in the prophetic literature, like the constellations of the zenith, in a waveless sea.

But the order in the heavens is revealed to us through comets more splendidly than in any other way. When I first looked upon the brilliant stranger in our heavens, some two weeks ago, I was troubled that I could not know its history. I wanted the answer to the questions, "Have you ever visited this quarter of the universe before?" "Is our sun a stranger to you, or have you felt his rein upon you in former circuits around him?" "Are you the long-expected comet which terrified Europe in 1556, before it was widely believed in civilization that our earth was only a small and moving satellite of the imperial sun?"

It has been supposed by prominent astronomers that the comet of 1556 was a member of our solar system, and revolves around the sun in about three hundred years. Its return has been predicted in 1858 or in 1860 or 1861, and I could not but regret that, when the comet burst into view, it was not able to announce to the beholders its identity and its place in the order of the firmament.

But then, I said to myself, it will soon be known whence and who this new-comer is. Swift as he flies, lawless as he seems, speedily as he will disappear on his retreat from the sun, it will soon be known and published what his history is, and whether human eyes have ever looked upon him before. After three or four patient observations with a telescope, the skilled astronomers will decipher in what curve the new visitor is moving. They will tell the speed of its flight. They will announce from what depths of space it rushed, and whether or not it has crossed the track of the planets that swing around the sun ; and although no accurate observance was made of its position in the heavens before, although it may appear in different size and splendor now, although no human eyes even with a powerful telescope have ever been or will ever be able to follow a thousandth part of its immense ellipse, they will declare with the same surety as if they had then been living and had seen it, if it be the same flaming meteor that swept over Europe three hundred years ago, — more than a half-century before the foundations

of our America were laid, ten generations distant in the history of man !

A modern French atheist has ridiculed the exclamation of David, "The heavens declare the glory of God !" He says that the heavens declare the glory of Kepler and Newton and La Place. David is right, and so is the Frenchman right in what he affirms, though he is insane in what he denies. The magnificence of the sky ought not to abase human nature with a feeling of worthlessness. The greatness of man is written in star-type as well as the infinitude of God. Nothing less than an intellect kindled from the Perfect Reason could have discerned the reach and detected the laws, and foreannounced the motions of the heavens. It is the glory of Newton and Herschel that the heavens display, — the glory of intellect, one ray of which is in the genius that has studied the heavens, and before which the mind that unrolled and spotted and sustains them is as if the whole sky were one overpowering sunlike flame. David himself connects, in the sublime Eighth Psalm, the glory of the heavens with the majesty of human nature : "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him ?" But he instantly exclaims, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have

dominion over the works of thy hands." One cannot say before the heavens, "man is nothing in presence of the universe!" The lifetime of man seems nothing in presence of the universe, — its vastness, order, and persistence. But man seems sublime in presence of the universe, for its glory is the glory of thought and wisdom, and his intellect penetrates to these, discloses and interprets them. It is only about a year ago that a chart was prepared for an American scientific association, showing all the eccentricities in the path of one of the planets (Vesta) in the last five hundred thousand years. The Almighty has made the human intellect for partnership in the deeps of his counsels and the majesty of his thoughts.

In the year 1456, before the true theory of the heavens was known, before the birth of Copernicus and of modern science, a comet appeared over Europe which excited very wide and deep alarm. Its trail was of surpassing brilliancy, and reached two thirds of the distance from the horizon to the zenith. It was almost universally believed to be connected with the powers of evil in nature, and the Roman pope, Calixtus Third, issued a bull against it, putting it under anathema, in order to protect the Christian world from its malign influence. I do not know how soon after this papal manifesto the monster began to fade from the sky, nor do I know whether its disappearance was attributed to the virtue of the priestly edict. We know only that the people were greatly

comforted that the Holy Father attempted to whip back the intruder from the peaceful fold of the heavens, and that the superstitious fear and the equally superstitious relief are adequate representations of the feeling with which comets were regarded before the birth of modern science.

Now look on this picture. In the year 1682, about the time that the law of universal gravitation was demonstrated, a remarkable comet was seen on the sky over Europe. Halley, a great English mathematician and friend of Newton, attempted to compute its orbit. He announced that it travelled across the track of Jupiter and Saturn, and that it would recede from the sun to a distance of thirty-four hundred millions of miles before it would bend around for its returning flight. He declared that it was the same meteor which had frightened the civilized world so intensely in 1456. It was traced back to the year 1006, when its trail presented the appearance of an awful sickle blazing near the zenith. Even before the birth of Christ its identity was detected with the comet at the birth of King Mithridates, which is said to have equalled the sun in splendor.

Halley boldly announced these results, and predicted that it would return to be visible in Europe late in the year 1758 or early in 1759. This was the first prophecy ever made concerning one of these lawless and baleful fires.

The world was amazed to find that science, then only in its infancy, dared handle these prodigies

in this way, and dared believe that they were harnessed by beneficent and unyielding laws. It was almost impossible to convince men that it was not an arrogant delusion, and long after Halley was in his grave, as the year 1758 drew near, his prophecy that the comet would return excited very deep interest.

Two French astronomers, assisted by a lady, undertook to determine what its visible path would be in the heavens, and at what precise time it would approach nearest the sun. For six months the three devoted themselves to calculations, not stopping even at meals, and one of them contracted an illness which shattered his constitution. As the result, they predicted in what month it would pass around the sun unless there should be an unknown planet beyond Saturn; in that case the comet might be hastened nearly thirty days.

Halley, seventy-six years before, when it faded away, had declared that it would reappear late in 1758 or early in 1759. It was first detected on Christmas Day of 1758. The French mathematicians announced that it would approach nearest to the sun on the 11th of April, 1759. It reached that point on the 13th of March; and there *was* another planet, then unknown, revolving beyond the orbit of Saturn, which accounted for a large part of this slight error of less than thirty days. When the comet receded from Europe after that visit, it bore the name of "Halley," and wears it now, I doubt not, wherever it wanders in the cold and distant darkness, in the sight of angels.

It was expected again in 1835. Computations were made once more with the most rigid care. Its exact path and point of reappearance were announced. The test was anxiously awaited, and after its wild journey of seventy-six years, it burst into our sky at the point foretold, and reached the goal nearest the sun within nine days of the date which had been pledged by mathematicians.

The astronomers did not then know that there was still another planet invisible belonging to our system in the immensity of space. When the comet shall reappear in 1911, it will not be surprising if the time of its curve around the sun shall be predicted to a day by the astronomers then alive. In 1456 the Pope launched against it his anathema as a horror, hostile and hateful to God and the Church. Yet how little they knew then of the size of the monster! How little they knew that its diameter at the head was forty times that of the earth! In 1835 it was measured as it bent around the sun. It was found to be three hundred and fifty-seven thousand miles in diameter, with a trail a hundred millions of miles in reach. And then the Churches in Christendom drew lessons from it of confidence in the vast and beneficent order among the wild forces amid which our life is cast.

But since Halley's time, in 1682, an immense deal of work has been done in determining the paths and periods of comets. It has been found that there are thirteen which regularly wheel

around the sun, and never retreat from it beyond the orbit of the planet Saturn ; that there are six which cut ellipses about like Halley's, receding as far as the planet Uranus, and completing their orbits each in about seventy years, and that there are more than twenty which plunge beyond the farthest known planet of the solar system, and yet move in such curves that they must return to the sun.

The comet of 1858 was one of the last class. When it first appeared in that year, it was thought that it was the long-expected stranger of 1556, which was suspected by astronomers to move in an orbit of about three hundred years. But it was soon found that its range in the universe is far wider. It requires something like two thousand years for its revolution. It had never been seen in the Christian era. Perhaps it is the same with the brilliant one seen in old Rome forty-three years before Christ, and which was then believed to be the soul of Julius Cæsar, who had been recently assassinated, hovering over the world.

If it appeared then in the form of a scimeter, which it first assumed when we were permitted to see it in 1858, it might have been associated with that heroic, all-conquering soul, except that it seemed too sacred to be connected with mortal strife and passions. It seemed to us a holy falchion, a flaming brand for the spirit of the archangel Michael. And soon it changed into the curve rather of an immense pen, as though the

Creator were moving it to write his name on the blank darkness of space. On it plunged toward the sun till it approached to within nearly half the distance which our earth keeps from him, and wheeled around with a speed of one hundred and twenty-seven thousand miles an hour, and with a trail fifty-one millions of miles long and ten millions broad at the end, commenced its rush outwards into the darker spaces. It will move off, the astronomers tell us, slackening its speed gradually, crossing the earth's track and that of Mars and the asteroids, and Jupiter and Saturn and Uranus and Neptune, still out and out for a thousand years, beyond where the most powerful telescopes could discern it as a faint stain on the cold gloom, its rate of motion reduced at last to four hundred and eighty miles an hour, and then, ten centuries hence, it will wheel again and begin a leisurely return from a point thirty-five thousand millions of miles away. Hundreds of years it will travel back before reaching the outermost confines of the sun's planetary fold. Then it will hurry on its journey, and, flying faster and faster, blaze in its wild sword-shape or beautiful pen-curve for the admiration of the dwellers on this globe about the year 4000, when the astronomers that studied it in 1858 shall be studying it in heaven, not seeing "through a glass darkly," but understanding its essence, and comprehending its mission as an expression of the thought of God.

If such spaces and measures of distance seem

awful and make the brain reel, what shall we say or think on being told that when the comet shall reach its outpost, thirty-five thousand millions of miles away, it would have to keep on and travel a thousand times farther in order to reach the nearest fixed star?

But there are comets in contrast with which this last one is quite a home body in our system, too timid to wander far from the domestic hearth and fire. The curves of several have been calculated, and found to be such that it will take them over eight thousand years to complete their sweep. Indeed, astronomers by rigid mathematics have announced that the period of a comet which appeared in 1780 is over seventy-five thousand years; that one came within our system in 1830 which will return in sixty thousand years; and that the orbit of one which passed its perihelion October 17, 1844, is such, reaching one hundred and forty times as distant from the sun as the dim cold planet Neptune, so far out that the sun would be lost to its view, its orbit so immense as to require the constant motion of one hundred thousand years to sweep it. Even then it would not have begun to reach the most neighborly of the suns that we call fixed stars.

Is it not strange beyond all explanation that such hazy masses can preserve their identity and their form in the wonderful changes of temperature and condition through which they move! Think of the fleecy globe held by the gravitation

of the sun millions of miles beyond where the sun is visible, and forced by it to bend and begin to return! Think of the cold, as well as darkness, of that depth in space, — nothing but starlight, bleak, bitter, perpetual night! And when it reaches the confines of our system on its return, think of the increasing velocity of its plunge towards the sun, seeing it grow from a small to a larger star, then to the size which it shows to us, then swelling and swelling as it flies nearer, till at last, as in the case of the comet of 1680 and also of 1843, it grazes the sun's vesture with its atmosphere, plunging into a radiance and heat twenty-six thousand times greater, even, than that of Marysville and Sacramento, — a heat which Newton calculated to be two thousand times greater than red-hot iron, — and still not lost in it, but bending around it and escaping from it as safe as the loyal Hebrews from the fiery furnace of the King of Babylon!

The great Newton imagined that comets might be feeders of the sun, destined all of them, at some time, to plunge into and renovate its globe of flame. He confessed his belief that the one which appeared in 1680 would fall into the sun after five or six revolutions. And whenever that time shall come, he said, "The heat of the sun will be raised by it to such a point that our globe will be burnt, and all the animals upon it will perish."

There is no reason for our being frightened at

any peril from this particular cause, for the comet of 1680 does not complete its orbit in much less than nine thousand years, and if it requires five or six revolutions to be sucked into the solar jaws, they will be very distant descendants of ours that will suffer from the raised temperature of our planet. And although the great name of Newton is affixed to the speculation, there is no necessity that anybody shall be disturbed by it. For we see now that God has other methods of service for comets than to see them shovelled into the sun's hungry heat. He has stored the sun himself with a repellent energy that saves them, and that furnishes to them their brilliant trail and exquisite grace of curve, as a symbol of his mighty charity. The sun is no cannibal father like the old god Saturn of mythology, eating his children. And the solar system, the more minutely it is studied, becomes the more vivid and vast an expression of order and love!

The danger has often been debated of a collision between our globe and a comet, and the probable results have been discussed. Since astronomy has become a science, the fear has become frequent and sometimes intense. In fact, no dread of this kind was experienced in former times when these apparitions excited superstitious terror. In 1832 there was wide-spread alarm at the possibility of a catastrophe from such a cause, when it was announced that Biela's comet would cross the earth's track. Had the comet been four

days later the earth would have plunged into it to a depth of more than six thousand miles. But it is doubtful if we should have received any more damage than a cannon-ball from a Columbiad would in striking a floating mass of thistle-down. Some of them seem to have in the very thickest part of the nucleus nothing more solid to resist a planet, whirling, like ours, more than a thousand miles a minute, than the fog that drifts at evening into the Golden Gate, would offer to a Pacific mail-steamer under full steam. It could be smitten with as little damage as the ghost in Hamlet by the truncheon of Horatio. "It is as the air, invulnerable, and our weak blows malicious mockery." If there are no deadly gases in their mists, it is certain that many a comet which has visited our system might have been struck by the earth without our knowledge that we were experiencing anything more than a long spell of Boston east-wind.

With others, however, it would be different. The glorious comet of 1858 had a solid nucleus denser than granite, which astronomers were able to measure and weigh, about four hundred and fifty miles in circumference. This was a very small pit for the vapory pulp, which was forty thousand miles in diameter. But as a globe of granite only thirty miles in circumference would weigh six millions of millions of tons, neither earth nor comet would stand such gun-practice as their meeting in space would give, — each flying twenty miles a

second. The comet might get the worst of it; but it would be apt to make the country where it struck acquainted pretty quickly with the central fire, and open a good piece of testimony for geologists. Let us be thankful that we may rest confident — not knowing what a night may bring forth as to the return or irruption of these hurrying visitors — that the switches of the ecliptic, where these trains may cross, are never out of order, and are watched by a Will that seeks not chaos and destruction, but order and safety!

And now, suppose that the question is seriously asked and urged, "What are the uses of these flimsy and buoyant splendors that stream across the night?" how shall we answer?

We may conjecture that they are related to electric forces and currents in the solar system, that they are exchange messengers and equalizers in space. The comet of 1858 was studied very closely by very powerful telescopes as it came near the sun. There was tremendous turmoil in its globe of vapor. The envelope seemed to rise from the nucleus at the rate of thirty miles an hour. It seemed as though nothing could prevent the ghastly mass from being drawn by the sun's gravity into the jaws of its flame. But at the nearest point of approach an electric repellent influence went forth from the sun, more than twice as powerful as gravitation, driving off the brilliant trail from the nucleus, and saving the comet's mass from swift destruction. From depths

of space, which tire our calculation, the fleecy orb felt the sun's power and began to move towards it. It hastened as it grew nearer. Its speed grew frightful. It plunged like the dazzled and light-winged moth towards the central flame. But the sun, that had drawn it so far by its mere weight, now put forth the repellent force of its love to save it from dissipation, to store it with electric energy, perhaps for essential services and disbursements of mercy on its new career across the solar system into immensity.

If such be not the material uses which these bodies, or rather spectres in space, are serving, we know not what to answer or what to guess.

But suppose that we can find or imagine no palpable good of the physical order which they accomplish, what then? Shall we account them useless? Shall we think them mere blots on the creation? One of our friends, during the meeting in this church for the Protection and Relief Society last Monday night, in the course of an excellent and efficient speech, said that the present comet looked cold and selfish in its splendor, and that he longed to see its brilliance made productive of bread on the solid earth.

Bread is good; yet man lives "not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God." Do we not forget one of the great purposes of the creation when we relate it to physical needs, or to man in any sense exclusively? God created nature for himself as well

as for us, for his own joy as well as for our existence and comfort and education. What a sublime verse is that in the Book of Revelation, in the worship of the Elders: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

God created the universe to express his thought, to realize what we may reverently call conceptions of genius, to reflect the deeps of his imagination, and so, by its marvels and order, to fill his own spirit with joy. It is not necessary, therefore, that everything, or the majority of things, should serve what we call material uses. If they serve artistic uses to the Creator of nature, they are sacred, — we should bend before them. Did Shakespeare think of the use of every line and phrase when he flung a glowing ornament into the stately cadences of a great tragedy? Did Raffaele think of the cost or uses of the pigments, when he poured a new flush of color upon a group, or left some exquisite line or tender witchery of expression, in the very excess of creative opulence, to be immortal? Does the architect demand that every fragment of cornice or thread of tracery shall be of use in the statics of the building, or even that its beauty shall be only such as the mass of observers can appreciate? No, such genius pours from its own treasury to embody its own vision and satisfy its own heart.

And the universe is God's creation for his continual joy, that he may say ever, as when it was first completed, that "it is very good."

The planets move with glorious order, but they swing in circles, one drawn outside of the other, circles that never intersect or interfere with each other. And they move on the same plane, too. A line drawn from the centre of the sun would cut nearly every planet out as far as Neptune. The order of such a system is a little stiff and tame. What if the comets are intended to vary it by the strange curves they carve in flame, no two alike, — by their wild shooting across the paths of the solid globes, and by their unbridled liberty of approach to the sun? For the comets do not move on the plane of the ecliptic as planets do. Some of them play in it; some cut it diagonally from above; some cut it in the same way from beneath; some come straight up from below and loop the sun with their dishevelled fire and plunge down again; some sweep perpendicularly from the zenith over the sun, dive under and around him, and mount again the dizzy heights of the abyss; and some, the majority of those thus far seen, wheel about him and fly off in such a line that they can reappear within his influence.

What a wondrous spectacle does this make the system! There are immeasurably more comets than planets. Old Kepler said of them that they were thick as fishes in the sea. If it be true, as once said, that "God geome-

trizes," the comets are the chief sources of his artistic joy in space : they show the intricacies of the order to which his thoughts gave being ; they reveal how exact and beneficent are the awful forces in the system which suffer no interruption and no jar, although these corsair-strangers are running perpetually athwart the heavy-laden lugger planets in the ethereal sea.

And think of the wild beauty of a great comet in contrast with a sober orb like ours ! Think of one like the monster of 1811, its head more than a million of miles in diameter, immensely greater in volume than the sun, brushing the solar heat with its vapor, and then swiftly, as from a bulbous root, throwing off the spray of its blazing electric vapor a hundred millions of miles ! Such are the splendors connected with one solar system, wrought out by what we call its lawless and useless elements. Remember that each fixed star is the sun of such a system. There are millions of suns around which, probably, not only the staid planets, but such reckless and fantastic shapes are cutting their curves and shooting their thin fires. And then try to think what a spectacle the universe must be to the mind that holds it in vision from centre to outermost fringes of light, and ask if our word "uses" is the true one to measure these comet strangers by, or say if the song of the Elders is not rather the worthier philosophy.

And thus we are led to see that one of the great uses of comets, for the human race, is to

feed the sense of beauty, stir devout emotions, interpret the abysses of space, and educate the mind and soul in the uttered thoughts of God. If they make us wonder more, muse more, adore more, think more solemnly and yet with solemn joy of the play of God's power in space, and the amplitude and punctuality of his providence, they make life nobler, the heart more tender, the soul wiser ; they do us more good than if they simply dropped corn into our granary ; they help to fit us for the work of the world to come.

How sad it appears to some persons, and sometimes perhaps to the wisest, that human life seems so short in contrast with some fresh measure or index of what the scale of time is in the universe. Halley and Newton studied the comet of 1682 and prophesied its return in seventy-six years, — only three quarters of a short century. And yet such a mind as Newton's, the arch-intellect of centuries, the most august force on the planet, could not then be alive on the earth. The great comet of 1843 was found to revolve in three hundred and seventy-six years. Ten generations of star-students will be in their graves when it flings its splendor outward over space on its next visit. And the next time that the comet of 1858 " revisits the glimpses of the moon," two thousand years of human science and story, with all their freight of human genius and human hearts, will have floated into the past.

"How weak and frail and wretched is man!"

Yes, if comets blaze over his tomb! But what if they do not? What if Newton mounts to be learner and teacher of a higher realm? What if Halley is professor of astronomy in a more favorable academy? What if Lalande is borne where calculations do not shake the constitution! What if Laplace is wafted where he cannot doubt of God while he studies his geometry in wider heavens? I do not believe that God accounts the student less worthy than the blackboard. I do not believe that he made his pupils to die, and the diagrams he has drawn for them, and for his own delight, though they be in star-fire, to be imperishable.

The world to come has solemn spiritual conditions; but we must not fail, either, to see that it is glorious as a sphere of mental training and advance and intellectual victory and joy. One of the great mathematicians of the world has lately said that there is one set of curves connected with the solar system whose mathematical investigation would furnish abundant occupation for the most powerful human intellect for at least a hundred millions of years. He said this soberly in a carefully written paper. It is for such purposes that God created powerful minds, that they may learn and enjoy and grow, and become teachers of others, and lead lesser minds into the paths and deeps of his own thought and wisdom. It is for such purposes, in part, that the heavens are bent over the habitation of spirits on this earth. It is

for such purposes that the stranger-lights, though they bear no freight of minds in their wild track, move in their fantastic lines over space. And when the body breaks on this solid orb, it is to set the spirit free for the clearer and devouter study of astronomy on a higher plane of being, where the true souls shine themselves as stars for ever and ever.

XXI.

RELIGIOUS LESSONS FROM METALLURGY.

"The fining-pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the Lord trieth hearts." — *Proverbs* xvii. 3.

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." — *Matthew* xxii. 37-40.

THE Bible has a great deal of imagery drawn from the ancient processes of reducing ores to represent the moral government of the world. And the agents of his providence always sit, according to the figure of Malachi, as refiners and purifiers of silver.

To get the dross out of us, — this is the sovereign aim of our training in this world. In education the main purpose is to free the mental faculties of the dross of sloth and prejudice. In active life the great success is in confirming the fibre of energy and character. In higher relations the object of the Almighty is to burn out the dross of the spirit, and make us noble and pure. The truth and influence of the Bible, the laws of retribution in society, the revelations in experience

of the effects of moral disobedience, are furnace-heats to separate the good elements from the bad in character, and where this is impossible, to separate the good characters from the bad.

And now ask yourself, What is dross in human character? What do you represent by it when you use that word in your own thought and imagery? Suppose you are inclined to avarice, the excessive love of money. If you think of your own character as lifted, strengthened, made better, do you think of that quality of avarice as untouched? Do you think of it as stronger than it is now? Or do you think of it as weaker, as melted down in part, and poured off from your soul like scum? Now consider profanity, levity, intemperance, lust, moral sluggishness, vanity, haughtiness, insolence of words or manners, irreverence, rebellion in feeling against Providence, — translate these into natural language, into the language of metals and the crucible, what are they? — valuable elements or foul ones, dross or gold?

But take the converse qualities, — reverence, purity, zeal for good, aspiration, generous use of money, the spirit of sacrifice, charity, devotion to the will of God, — how do you represent these in your imagination? I do not ask how the Bible represents them; in what thrilling or fiery imagery prophets and apostles speak of them. But I ask, How do you think of them? When you see a character that represents these, do you sponta-

neously say, or think, that he is a noble or an unwise man? Do you imagine that if he could be made still better he would lose any of these qualities, or would lose rather the qualities still attached to them that impede their exhibition a little and debase them? You say at once these are the noble, these are the precious, elements of human nature and human life. These are the pure silver and gold of the moral world.

Now, brethren, God is seeking to bring out these qualities into greater concentration and prominence by his moral government. Left to ourselves, to the wandering, undirected impulses of our constitution, mentally and morally, we should always be in the ore state. The hardships of life, the tough conditions that surround the attainment of truth and the training of character, are God's reducing and refining processes. The world is constructed on the principle of correspondences. The law for metallic ores is the law for character. By hammers and stamps and mills and furnaces and acids, He is at work upon us to beat out and expurgate the dross, and develop the latent good which the soul may show.

I do not mean to maintain here that all the hard conditions of life can be explained by this figure, or by any figure or theory of man's device. A great deal in the ordering and permissions of Providence can never be understood probably in this world. But a world without hardships, to such beings as we are, would be a far worse, a far

more disastrous, world than the present. Adam, if he had stayed in Paradise, as the book of Genesis describes it, would have been a poorer creature than his "fall" enabled him to be. What would a ton of ore, taken out in one slab, be likely to say, if it could be conscious, when carried to the batteries of the mill, and then washed for gold, and roasted to drive off sulphur, and pounded again, and mixed with quicksilver, and heated once more to drive off the mercury, and melted again into a mixed bar, and assayed, and still once more melted and granulated into cold water, and then gnawed by nitric acid, to take up the silver and leave the gold as sediment, and then precipitated from the acid as pure silver powder, and washed, and packed into cakes by hydraulic presses to squeeze the water out of it, and melted again in bars, and run through rollers, and punched, and milled, and stamped,—thus becoming fit to serve the daily necessities of civilization? Suppose it should be told, half-way in the process, that all this was good for it, was part of a great plan, supremely wise, for its permanent benefit! Would it not be likely to say, "Why did you not leave me in my sluggish content in the darkness of the mine? I was happy there. I had no dream there of a higher and better lot. I should have never known these terrible buffets and scourgings and bitings and pressures if I had been left there. O for that gloom and calm again!"

In its silver-bar state, afterwards, in its coin-state, will it say so? It can look back, then, on the trials and pains, and see their meaning, and read their bitter but splendid benevolence. One of these days, when we get out of the crucible and beyond the laboratory, — out perhaps of the globe and the body, both of which to many of us are only one long crucible, or a swift series of transitions from the pestle to the flame, — we shall be able to comprehend the purposes of Providence; we shall be able to see the whole truth underlying the wonderful exclamation of the Apostle, whose Hebrew dross was smitten off by one lightning stroke, leaving the Christian silver: “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us!” We see enough now to show that the best qualities of human nature are brought out and tested by difficulty and suffering. To the choice characters of the world God can say now, as the Spirit said through Isaiah, “I have refined thee, but not with silver: I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.” And if this world is designed not as the final state for the enjoyment of God, but as the state in which we get the preparation of quality within for the true knowledge and enjoyment of him, we find the whole secret of life, — of its terrors and its hidden mercy, — when we follow the ore from its cave to its appearance as the clean silver and the flaming gold.

Do not fail, either, to receive the searching lesson as to judgment hidden in this analogy. The ore is tested thoroughly as the final process of its history. The assayer, by balance and fire, determines exactly what its quality is and its worth. And the processes of God's government are taking us to judgment. It is to be known and seen one day just what we are. This is to be our judgment. It will not be, as unripe theologies foolishly maintain, an arbitrary opinion and decree of God. Nor can we escape it by shielding ourselves under the righteousness of the holy Christ. What we are is to be shown yet in the moral world. The day is coming when, by the operations of spiritual law, every soul will be assayed and stamped, and pass for what it is — no more, no less — in the realm of souls. To the great judgment of truth you and I, and all the millions living, are moving with every heart-beat, and nothing can save us from its severity and its rewards. "The fining-pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold ; but the Lord trieth the hearts."

But I ought not to pass from the general topic of the refinement of dross from men, as part of the intention of hardship in the moral government of the world, without alluding to the experience of our nation in its present struggle.

What should this war, with its terrible flames and hissings and thunder-hammers be, but a process of purification for the imperial republic? What does God intend for us less than that?

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The only payment for the awful expenditure of blood and hopes is that the nation shall come out, not only whole, but homogeneous, — sounder in its system of labor, nobler and more symmetrical in its civilization, the cinders and clinker, the slag and scum, left by years of guilt and folly, ought to be driven off by the frightful heats and fury of the war. Then our children will bless these battle-years, the debt we leave will look cheap to them ; and men who study our strife from the distance of a century will say, "Then God sat by the furnace, and smelted America till her crime was purged, and she became pure gold."

If we pass now to consider sectarian divisions and strifes in the Christian Church, we can gain some help in a right estimate of them, and for a wise charity, from analogies in the science of metallurgy. The great object of the New Testament and of Christianity is to increase religious qualities practically in the world, to add pure working forces to life, so that men will be nobler and happier in themselves and in their relations to each other. No church is the New Testament. No church is Christianity. You might as well say that a mill is a mine, or that one set of mills is all the mineral wealth of the world. Different churches apply Christianity, or pure religion, to human nature, according to some peculiar method, custom, or theory, in order to refine and ennoble the characters of men, just as

different mills apply different methods of reduction and different mineral theories to ores.

There is a great deal to be said, in the controversy between different methods of reduction, in favor of some processes as being very much wiser than others. And what has been the result? Partisanship has not triumphed. Broad views have been victorious. God has made different kinds of ores, and equally rich in different kinds. For some kinds of mineral one process is admirable; for other kinds a very different treatment is essential. And human nature is analogous. Evils are thrown off from men, and good is practically brought out, by a variety of spiritual methods; and that church or system of training is the best for a soul which fits its temperament and quickens its will. In some men the good is quickly and easily appealed to and developed. A simple faith and administration will reach and awaken it. Others have the sulphurets in the soul. They are obstinate. Common batteries and cool washings do not do the work. They need heat, fire, the treatment of the element of fear; that takes hold of them. Calvinism is the process that reduces their stubborn self-will, and makes them agents of good. Give the proper temperaments to each church, — let the Episcopalians take those that can be best reached by their methods, and the Methodists take their natural material, and the Swedenborgians and the Quakers and the Calvinists theirs, and the Unitarians theirs, and great good will be

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done. The world of character will be richer. The work of the Spirit will be variously and properly performed. "There are differences of administrations, but the same Lord." Trouble often comes from misarrangement of characters under methods. Some people are ill at ease under Calvinistic ideas and treatment who would be happier and stronger under Unitarian training. Some are brought up Episcopalians who are natural Quakers ; some are Baptists who were born for Swedenborg's philosophy and culture. Apportion souls right, and the Church would be stronger for its varieties of method and theology,—as this coast is richer by the rival processes in treating ores.

But did you ever hear of a metallurgist denying that gold is gold, because it was obtained by another process than that which he uses and favors? The contests of rival melters and assayers are over the question, Which is the wisest and cheapest method for bringing out the precious metal for use in the world? They do not presume to say that no metal is good but that which their furnaces have yielded. Theologians in their sphere have essentially done that. No practical Christianity, they sometimes presume to say, nothing that God will accept and bless, will issue, or can issue, from your processes of administering truth, because you ignore the only means by which good is developed in men.

In science men appeal to the facts. If you put

in a ton of ore and take out a pound of gold, you may say that there ought to be two pounds, but you can't say that the process does n't produce any gold. And if a system of Christian administration produces honesty, integrity, principle, charity, interest in worship, interest in good ideas and good government and liberty and order, quiet and elevated homes, readiness to serve others and to hold gifts and treasures partly in trust for others, — are these qualities to be denied to be good because the process which produces them is different from the ordinary customs? The melter and assayer does not make coin; society does not allow him to put his stamp on money and say all gold is spurious which is not poured from my crucibles. It is his office to produce gold. The government coins and issues it, and allows that great office to no private hands. So the business of churches is to produce purity, reverence, integrity, charity, readiness to do good in all forms. God rates and stamps the products, and his judgment is the final and the only one as to the honesty or spuriousness of the products of the sanctuaries. There is a Baptist culture and thought and theology; there is a Methodist one, and an Episcopalian one, and a Catholic one, and a Presbyterian one. But there is no such thing as a Presbyterian truthfulness, a Baptist charity, an Episcopalian benevolence, a Unitarian integrity. These qualities are absolute. They have no sectarian stamp. They are the precious

gold and silver of life wherever they appear ; and the attempt to localize or sectarianize them would be as futile as the attempt to refer each eagle or half-dollar of our daily currency to the lode whence it issued, or the laboratory where it was reduced.

It is perfectly proper for a man to say, 'I believe that my church, with its theology and administration, is far better than any other to meet the needs of a large class of souls, and I love it and will cling to it, and strengthen it with all my power while I live.' This is noble. But when he says, "No other administration or form of creed than mine entitles a church to the name 'Christian,'" he is a bigot. And when he goes so far as to deny that the great qualities of integrity, honor, beneficence, and self-sacrifice are substantial and acceptable to God if they have been associated with a theology and form of worship different from his own, he is not far, alas ! from being a blasphemer of the Holy Ghost.

There is one other point upon which I wish to make our subject bear in illustration. I mean the objects and the concentrated value of the Old Testament history and literature. Jesus said that the first great commandment was love of God ; the second was love of man ; and "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." When one seizes these principles clearly in his thought, he holds mentally, then, the practical worth of the marvellous volume that begins with Genesis and closes with Malachi. When he strives

to express these principles in his action, he is endeavoring to live out all that the inspiration of the Old Testament, whatever be its extent or grade, has to offer as truth for the will of man.

The tunnels, shafts, and galleries of the mine, the picks and shovellings and blastings, the ropes and pulleys and engines, the pumping and draining, the hoisting and assorting, the labor and cost of transportation to the mill, the strength and expense, and all the appurtenances of the mill itself, — the water or steam power, the wheels and belts and drums, the heavy stampers and batteries, the screens and sieves, the vats and mercury and chemicals, the washing and drying, the roasting and sweating, the melting and moulding into bars, — all are for the sake of the little shining bricks that are delivered from the reducing furnace at last. On those small squares of blended silver and gold hang all the worth and purpose of the mineral vein, and the toil and science and treasure expended on its development.

There is a great discussion now about the Bible, especially the Old Testament, and its religious value. Is it a verbally inspired, completely accurate, and authoritative revelation? The Old Testament is a very wonderful book, and its value in the religious and providential training of the world cannot readily be stated. But it is not a continuous revelation. It does not offer you concentrated spiritual truth in all its pages, the pure silver and gold of the Spirit. The Old Testament

is a great lode, or precious mineral vein, upheaved and winding through the strata of a national history. There are different kinds and qualities of ore in it,—some easy, some difficult of reduction to the pure standard of moral truth. What splendid “pay streaks” there are in it, like Isaiah and portions of the Psalms, in which you can see the sparkle of the native silver and the free gold! Follow Joshua and the Judges, and the average rock is not so rich. Some insist that it does not pay for working. There are, also, what miners call “horses” in it,—documents like Esther and Ecclesiastes and chapters of the Chronicles,—in which there is none of the precious metal of inspiration. Streaks of trap-rock, too, like the book of Daniel, cross it, injected from a later age. And there are pages in it like Solomon’s Song, showing the sparkle of iron pyrites which so many have mistaken for the glitter of genuine gold.

The Old Testament, compared with all other ancient national literatures, is a religious gold and silver vein immensely, incalculably, divinely rich. That is its distinction in the world, and will be its distinction forever. And, by the statement and authority of Jesus himself, we get its concentrated value in the laws of love to God and our neighbor. It exists to educate the world to those principles and to supply means for extending those qualities. Theologies, councils, commentaries, churches, are finally valuable to the soul, not as they bind you and enslave you intellectually to the Old Testa-

ment, but as they help you to grasp and retain those two religious statutes on which hang all the Law and the Prophets, and in which they are all summed up. Rightly studied, the Old Testament is, I believe, yet an immense help to the religious nature of man. But if any portions of its pages do not help and feed you, do not yield to you the precious gold of practical religious truth, you are at liberty to drop them. They are not your master ; they are offered only as your help.

If you revere and love God, or try to, as the Infinite and Gracious Providence, if you love man and show it by service offered to human need, you carry in your heart what the Old Testament was organized to teach you. Inspiration, portable and practical, is found in the twin laws of religious and social love. If you understand little of commentaries and theological discussion and council lore, and have these, you have what Jesus Christ called the essentials. Knowledge of mining is good, but its practical value is in furnishing the silver for human use. This spirit of love is the silver into which the inspiration collected from the ore of the Bible is finally reduced. If you do not possess this spirit, your Biblical learning is only intellectual wisdom, your soundness of faith is only correct thinking ; and though you be baptized every day in the name and forms of the most orthodox creed, you advance not by a step towards the kingdom of heaven. It is not I that say this. It is the Apostle Paul. For he said : "Though I

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have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge ; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." And again he said, "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

1863.

XXII.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.*

THIS is the first formal discourse that is to be uttered in our new house of praise. The occasion itself seems to ask us to consider the broad subject of worship. And no passage within the compass of the Bible opens that subject with words of such liberality and power as those which were spoken by Jesus of Nazareth to the woman of Samaria near Jacob's well. They are written in the twenty-third verse of the fourth chapter of St. John's Gospel: "The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth."

Of the breadth and inclusiveness of this passage and its relation to theological controversies and Christian forms of devotion, we may be called to speak further on, but it is of worship itself as a natural, noble, and precious expression of human feeling that I wish first to treat.

This church is erected to train and feed the spirit of worship. Not only by hymns and prayers,

* Preached at the opening of the new church in San Francisco, January 10, 1864.

but by the influence of instruction and appeal as well, one of its main purposes — we may say, indeed, decisively the main purpose of the services to be held in it on Sundays, year in and year out, till its material decays, is to stimulate and refresh the feelings of wonder and awe, of obligation, gratitude, and trust before the Infinite.

The spirit of adoration is as old as the records of humanity. Adam heard the voice of God in the garden. Abel offered sacrifice to an unseen power; and the guilty Cain bowed with his gift, though it was not accepted. From the border line of light, where authentic history fails us, we feel our way back towards the birth of man by the ruins of temples and the fragments of solemn tradition. Of early races and nations that have perished, we know, in many instances, nothing more than this, — they worshipped.

The disposition to worship belongs to the structure of the human soul. Religious ideas are changed by the progress and diffusion of knowledge. Forms and theories of worship are shattered and left behind by the enlargement and the march of the intellect. Is it probable that worship itself will be outgrown? Sometimes we hear of fears that it may be so. Now and then a boast is made by an enemy of superstition that the advance of science will yet eradicate the tendency to prayer and homage. The answer to the fear and the boast is this: "Is it likely that the progress of science will degrade human nature

and extinguish one of the deepest elements of human nobleness?" With the gain of knowledge we instinctively associate the advance of our race. Think, for a moment, of this globe filled with inhabitants, and no spire or dome of praise on it, no pulse or throb of adoration in all its millions! Think of this globe simply in its physical aspect, "a crust of fossils and a core of fire," spinning in the bleak immensity, and bearing myriads on myriads of intelligent creatures yearly around the sun, without wonder, without awe, without any cry from brain or heart into the surrounding mystery! Suppose that the minds of these multitudes shall be cultured far beyond the average of even the most favored classes now, would you account it an advance of human nature, if all this knowledge was gained at the cost of the sense of a vast, incomprehensible power, within whose sweep the world and all its interests is bound? Would you count it an advance, if it was purchased at such a price that there should never be again on the earth any tower to represent a place of adoration, any organ-music to bear up a chant or anthem, any hymn of pleading or penitence, any public or secret supplication for spiritual protection and strength, any prayer of agony or affection at the burial of the dead? This is what it means, when the statement is made that science is to banish worship. Would it be a rise or a fall of humanity, — such progress? and do you believe that the race is on the way, through knowledge, to such a destiny?

Worship will cease when wonder dies in the heart of man, and when the sense of the infinite is expunged from his soul. Is the progress of knowledge likely to produce either of these results? How can all the light we can collect and concentrate from finite facts release us from the conception of the infinite, or help us to enclose it within the tiny measure of our thought? And when has science so explained anything as to banish wonder from the mind that appreciates the explanation? When the old belief that the earth was flat and still yielded to the proof that it is round and restless, was there anything in the change of conceptions to paralyze wonder or release the mind from awe? When the speed of light was measured, did religion suffer any shock through the sealing up of mystery? When the structure of the beam of light was unfolded by analysis, and the hues of the colorless braid dishevelled, were the minds that gained the new knowledge injured in their religious instincts by the banishment of their ignorance? And when human thought tries to measure and appreciate the distance of the nearest fixed star which astronomers have calculated, after patient and delicate experiments of years, is there anything in the process by which the blank evenness of space is thus broken, and a diamond-point moved back so far that the nimblest imagination is appalled in the attempt to realize it; anything to embarrass the intellect in taking the attitude of worship;

anything to stifle the cry of adoration from the soul to whom that knowledge comes?

Ah! against what folly are we arguing thus? Our knowledge in this universe to dry up the springs of awe, and deliver us from the weakness of adoration! Let the man come forward who is ready to say, under the starry arch of night, "I know so much of nature that I blow as a bubble from me the thought of God, and count it childish to entertain the thought of a Sovereign Mind!" Did Newton feel like saying that? Would Herschel say that in his observatory? If they had said it, should we think of them as greater men than now? If David could have known the skies as we know them, would he have had less reason to say, would he have been less moved to exclaim, "When I survey thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him"?

It will not be the progress of knowledge, but the decay of the noble elements in human nature, that will ever banish worship from the world.

Indeed, the glory of knowledge is in fellowship with the devout sentiment. There are three purposes for which we may study truth, — to obtain power over nature, to cultivate and enlarge our minds, and to discern and acknowledge a revelation from a boundless and invisible thought. A man may study the law of gravitation in all its proofs and applications in order to widen his con-

trol over matter through accurate comprehension of the conditions of mechanical force. He may study it with equal ardor, without any reference to practical uses, but for the sake of enlarging the domain of truth over which his intellect can sweep, for the mere thirst after the light and joy of knowledge. And he may also study it, in its relation to this globe and all worlds, as a disclosure of the thought of an unfathomable Intellect that unfolds itself in the order of the universe. In which of these ways is the glory of knowledge attained? I say nothing in disparagement of the first two, of course. They are essential to civilization. The last is not inconsistent with devotion to the others. But if men stop with the first two, do they not miss the highest relations of truth? They study facts without their fountain. They read words with no reference to the genius that published them. They live in a world of cold effects that never hint the majesty of their cause.

It is to refresh men with this noblest relation of truth and knowledge that churches are built. With the unfolding of truth as universities teach it, and for such purposes, a church has little to do. But it has a right to use all the truth that science gathers and establishes in illustration of the mind and providence of God. Worship is the exercise which the Church is to sustain. And all the aspects of truth which will bend the mind of man in humility and exalt it in adoration are legitimately within the range of the pulpit, and are, indeed, a portion of its trust.

We dedicate this house to the worship of God "in truth." We have no fear of desecrating the sacred hours if we listen here to interpretations of the majesty and providence of the Almighty through lessons from nature. Sometimes we hear criticisms of the Unitarian pulpit, and even sneers at it, because it often introduces topics from nature that seem, it is said, more suitable for lectures than for sermons. Our answer is that we find God in nature, and we build our pulpits to interpret God. We find God in Mount Shasta as in Hermon, and do not fear to say so on Sunday. We see the majesty of God in the Sierra as in the range of Lebanon, and are not restrained now and then from the confession. We find the eternal goodness and beauty mirrored in Lake Tahoe as Christ found them in the colors of Gennesareth, and we have not learned from him to be timid in our acknowledgment of what God unfolds. And so long as the book of Job remains in the Bible with its appeal for faith, in the most eloquent chapters of the world's literature, drawn from the aspects of creation; and so long as the One-hundred-and-fourth Psalm pours its praise through verses that mark the outline of human knowledge twenty-five centuries ago; and so long as the sublimest passages of prophets are those which use the mountains, stars, and sea as the conductors of the glory of the Omnipotent; and so long as Paul invites us to understand how the invisible things of God are made known by the things that

are made ; and so long as Jesus Christ publishes his insight through parables, and calls us, that we may know the constancy and tenderness of Providence, to "consider the lilies of the field how they grow," — we have no hesitation, on grounds of reverence for Scripture, in making appeal within the Church for adoration of the Infinite, to the wonders of his thought and power that are opening to men from the depths of the earth, from the study of the hills, from the structure of the animate creation, from the splendors and marvels of light, from the liberality of sea and air, from the subtile surprises of the microscope, and from the tremendous spectacle and forces which the telescope has unveiled.

We believe that the misuse of the Church is not that such themes are occasionally brought into it, but rather when they are steadily kept out. Truth is wasted when it is not turned to account to make men more reverent before the Infinite. And scepticism, or indifference to sacred truth, is now increasing in Christendom, for one prominent reason, because pulpits are not more faithful in interpreting the new aspects and disclosures of science as part of the unveiling of the Almighty to man.

We dedicate this house to the worship of one God, the source and support of all life and the ruler of all souls. We build it not only to adore him in the wonder with which his works are contemplated, but also in the homage we pay to his sovereign righteousness. In this line of worship

we come into deeper fellowship with the spirit that breathes from the chief pages of the Bible.

I have said that the glory of knowledge lies in the acceptance of truth as a manifestation of an Infinite mind. It is, however, a profounder and more thrilling statement that is made, when we are told that all truth and beauty issue from a holy and sovereign Will. This is the foundation for a more vital worship from man, — the pouring of incense upward from our conscience and our moral powers. Show me two men, one of whom has enriched his mind with all the laws of every modern science, but who does not vitally believe in the sacred personality of God as the patron of all goodness, and the other of whom, with but slight acquisition of secular knowledge, is penetrated with a conviction that the world is ruled by a righteous and all-potent Will, and I will show you in the second man a nobler man, and a man who has attained deeper truth than the first.

The world was startled not many years ago by the announcement that a European astronomer suspected that he had discovered a central sun. Around one of the Pleiades he believed that there was evidence for thinking the whole mass of stars sprinkled upon our night was slowly revolving. What a conception that one of those little points of light is the axis of such a stellar whole! The doctrine of one God is a mightier thought than that. The doctrine that his will is opposed to

evil, that his eyes are too pure to behold iniquity, that his worship, to be accessible, must be offered in simplicity of heart, and with a desire to be redeemed from evil and to aid the cause of good, and that thus all spirits of all worlds, the spirits of the just made perfect, and the emotions of angels are honoring Him, is a conception that dims the physical magnificence of the outward heavens.

Every church is reared to represent this thought. The Bible has inwrought this doctrine with the mind of the race. This was the deepest inspiration of David, of Isaiah, of Jeremiah, of Habakkuk. This is the substructure of the edifice of religious truth in the New Testament. And this is a conception that cannot be outgrown. It is ultimate. We can grow in the acknowledgment of it, in the power and blessedness which acquaintance with it brings; but the wisest man that will ever live can never go beyond it. In harmony with all Christians we are to worship here the immaculate righteousness of the Creator. We shall bring our sinfulness here, not to hide it, but to pray that it may be forgiven and cleansed. We shall bring here the record of our sluggishness in service, that in his light we may be affected with shame and spurred to nobler endeavor. We shall bring here the cause of the poor and the oppressed, every interest of needy humanity and struggling truth, assured that his ear is ready for every petition that commends to him the hope and suffering of his children. We

shall bring here the record of our victories over evil — few as they will be — with the confidence that they will be accepted as the most sincere homage of his equity and truth. Civilization depends on the continuance of faith in the personality and holiness of God. It is only through that faith that the consciences of men will be illumined, that the will of man will be curbed, that the devotion and sacrifice of heroes in the cause of truth will be inspired and confirmed. To all the wholesome awe which that faith sheds, to its menace of guilt, and its welcome of all goodness as divine, we devote our church.

But there is still a higher conception connected with the personality and purity of God, — the word "Father." The Bible in all its prophetic chapters glows with the solemn light of the divine holiness. But Jesus first uttered with confidence and tenderness, as the bond of union for the whole race in worship, the word "Father." In a very few passages of the Old Testament that word is associated with the Infinite. But Jesus never used any word suggesting power chiefly, or holiness exclusively, in relation to the Creator. He never speaks of God as the Creator, or the Almighty, or the Sovereign, or the Infinite, or the Eternal. Neither of those words was ever used by Jesus, so far as the records tell us of his thought. Whenever he described God, it was the word "Father," and only that, which he used. And when this word — the fountain of love — was

added to the conception which the Old Testament had traced in fire of the personality and Righteousness of the Infinite, the structure of the Bible as the educator of the world's religious sentiment was complete. God is one, God is holy, God is the Father,—the Infinite is love; then the attraction is complete in the heavens for all the faculties of man, and for all human faculties in every race, in every age, and in all stages of progress and attainment.

We owe this final revelation to Jesus Christ. The sense of mystery, the sense of beauty, the will, the conscience, the affections,—all are drawn upward to that name with which, through him, the Infinite has clothed himself. We build our house in honor of this supreme thought of the supreme soul of all centuries. To the worship of God the Father we rear and devote it.

It is not every heart that reaches that faith, even among sincere Christians. It is not on every day, or every Sunday, that those to whom it does come are able to hold and enjoy it. But when we do gain the vision of it, we reach a conception vaster and more precious than all the books of science can unveil; and when we do for a season feel the joy and experience the peace of it, it is a joy which the world cannot give or take away, it is a "peace that passeth understanding." The soul in which faith in the paternity of the Infinite has its home, and which relies on it in all the shocks and surprises of experience, the soul

which interprets this world by its light, and colors the next with its hope, however slight may be its attainment in knowledge, has reached the height of inward power and rest.

Adoration of the Father is the distinctively Christian worship. "The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." How broad this sentence is intellectually, as well as how deep spiritually! How it interprets the comprehensiveness as well as tenderness of the Christian faith! How it swells as the fitting dome over the foundations and walls of the Old Testament! How it sweeps high over the pride of races, the antagonisms of Christian theology, the bitterness of sectarian passion, the chronic antipathies of differing forms! Eighteen hundred years ago these words were spoken in Syrian air by the founder of Christianity. For nearly eighteen hundred years they have been read, in various tongues, in the written or printed records of the New Testament. Yet in their elevation and their inclusiveness they sound fresh and strange to-day.

If the question were put to the representative theologians of the great churches which seek to honor Christ, "What is the distinction of acceptable Christian worship?" how many prominent Catholics would dare to say, in reply, that temples and priestly ministrations are not essential to it? how many leading Trinitarians would promptly answer that the conception of the Trinity

is not vital? how many thoughtful Episcopalians, of all branches in that communion, would spontaneously acknowledge that the order and sacraments of the church cannot be intruded into it? how many Evangelical scholars would cordially confess that mental conceptions of depravity and atonement are subordinate, and must not be mingled with it? Yet Jesus does put all these out of sight. He does not say the true worshippers shall offer adoration to the Trinity, nor through the forms of the mass or any liturgy, nor with this or that conception of human sinfulness, nor in connection with any metaphysical theory of the cross; but "the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth."

"The day," says Ernest Renan, "when Jesus pronounced this word he was truly Son of God. He spoke, for the first time, the sure word on which the edifice of eternal religion shall rest. He founded the pure worship, of no land, of no date, which all lofty souls will practise to the end of time. His religion that day was not only the religion good for humanity, it was absolute religion; and if other planets have inhabitants endowed with reason and morality, their religion can be no other than that which Jesus proclaimed at Jacob's well. The word of Jesus has been a gleam in a dark night. But the gleam will become the full day; and after having run through the whole circle of errors, mankind will return to that word as the imperishable expression of its faith and its hopes."

Bow, brethren, before the breadth and insight of these words of the Great Teacher. Bow with your inmost spirit that you have reared a house in his name and to the praise of the Eternal Love to which he offered his soul. If there are any who deny that our worship is Christian, because our creed is discordant at many points with the popular conceptions of theology, rejoice that you can take shelter under the declaration of the Founder of our religion. Rejoice that you may know that, if the Father, to whom we rear this church, is honored here by love and trust, the offerings will be accepted and the worship will be blest. Rejoice also, and more deeply, that you are delivered from narrowness of theory in the Master's kingdom. Rejoice that you can gladly affirm that, in all churches, whether or not the doctrines be accurately true, and the ritual the best that can be devised, every breathing of adoration towards the Infinite Providence, every sincere prostration of the will before the Sovereign Holiness, every emotion of trust in the gracious care of the Eternal, every cry for help under the hardships and amid the pressures of life, is answered by the Spirit, who visits the heart and seeketh such as "worship in spirit and in truth."

Is it not cause for devout gladness, Christian brethren, that such an edifice is reared for such ideas in this youthful and thriving city? I do not say that we have built it for God, as though he requires it for his honor. He to whom the

universe belongs looks not for temples, made with hands, as themselves needed offerings in his praise. He who sees a myriad mornings painting countless worlds every instant, and the splendor of perpetual sunsets streaming over innumerable globes, requires not the structures heaved up by our puny toil. All the praise that God the Spirit asks is devout emotion, clean affections, trust in his love.

But that we may nurture devout emotion, that we may find the calm in which to seek him, and the aids for upward-looking thought, we need sacred places, rooms that are shielded from the intrusion of worldly suggestions, an air that is thrilled with devout music and spiritual appeal alone. We need the help of consecrated seasons and holy spots in order that we may the more readily worship the Father in spirit and in truth. If you cannot so easily find access to God here as elsewhere, if in your home your thoughts take wing to the Infinite benignity more readily than here, if in the presence of nature or under the inspiration of a wise and thrilling book — some revelation of truth by science, some sermon by a soul that was an organ of the Holy Ghost, some chapter from a devout man's life — your heart is moved into communion with the Infinite as it cannot be in the church, then this building and its services are not within your need. But if it is not so, — as with most of us I am sure it is not, — if in the toils and whirl of these busy days it is a bless-

ing to find a place where the chants of prophets are fitly winged with music, and the words of Christ are uttered, and the air is kept free for the pleading of Christian hymns and the interpretation of Christian sanctities,—and if that place has a beauty that is not out of harmony with the uses it was reared to serve,—will you not rejoice that such an aid is offered to you to prepare your feeling to meet and receive the blessing of the Spirit? There are no sacred places until souls make them so. But how much easier can souls make those places sacred that are not invaded by the rough conflicts and the coarse passions of the world! As our hymn has told us,

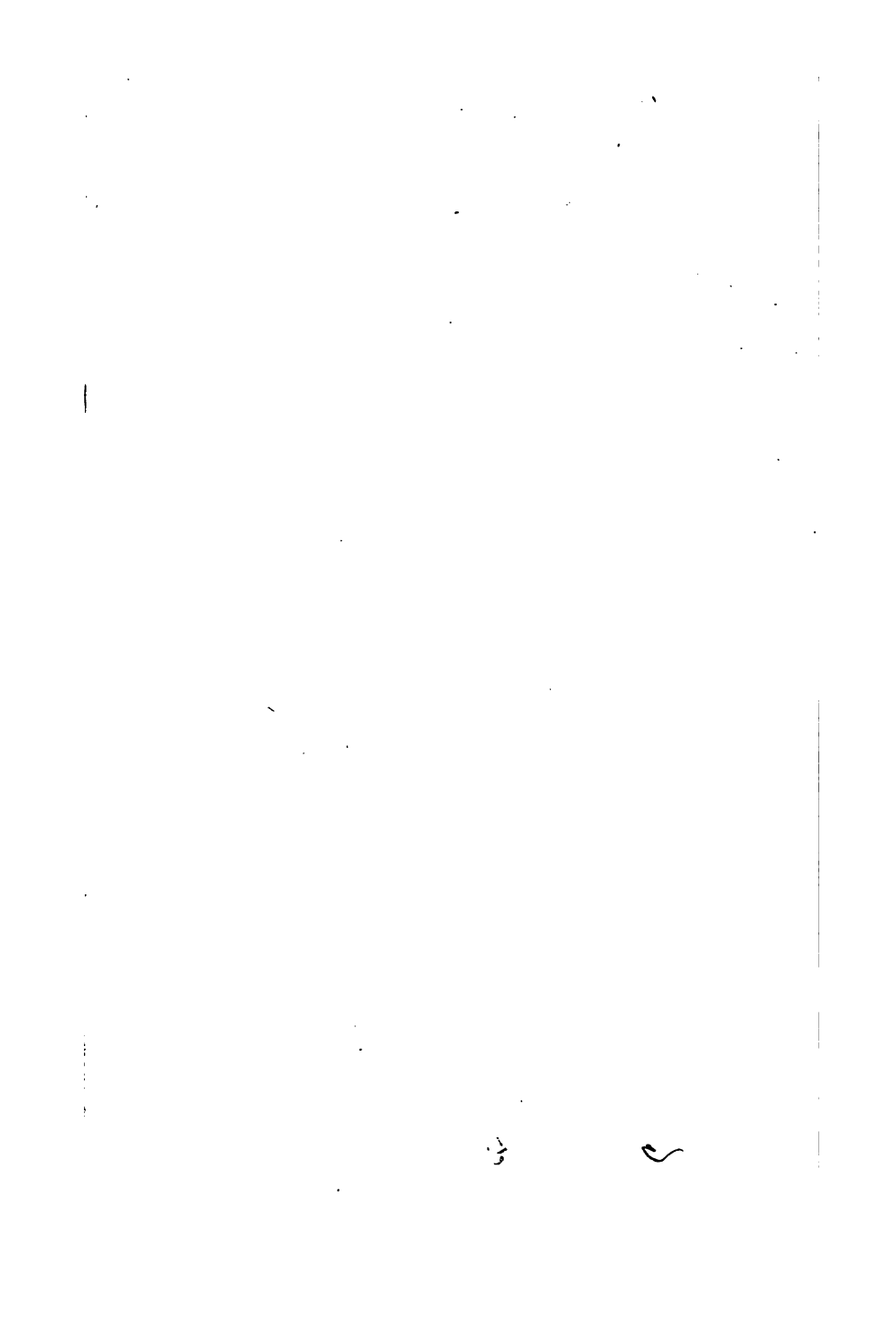
“ All space is holy, for all space
Is filled by thee ; but human thought
Burns clearer in some chosen place
Where thy own words of love are taught.”

Have we too many of such “chosen places” in our modern cities?—too many here, where not one eighth of the population regularly attend church? Have we too many in proportion to the interest we show in the secular development of our nature and our civilization? Above all, have we too many that are erected in testimony of our faith in the Infinite Fatherhood? No. You know how emphatically we must say no to each of these questions. I call on you to rejoice in this day’s work and offering. It is a tribute which the noblest faculties of our nature erect to the ideas and sanctities with which they are lifted into sympathy. It is a tribute of devotion to a form of

faith which we hold precious. It is a tribute of allegiance to the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth.

Shall we make our offering incomplete by leaving it unpaid for? Shall we say that we honor the highest powers of our nature so slightly that we are willing the very reverence we pay to them shall be liable to earthly mortgage? I trust not. I cannot believe that we are ready to consent that the shadow of debt shall be cast upon the beauty of our sanctuary, and dim the integrity of our consecration of it. Until a church is paid for — if the worshippers in it are able to pay for it — the building is nobler than the spirit of those who use it; it is not a sign of a living faith in great truths and sanctities in the hearts of those who sing their hymns and offer their supplication beneath its roof.

I trust and will believe that our new religious home is paid for already in the generous, if yet uncompleted, purpose of our congregation. I trust and believe that we feel the joy of devoting it to the highest uses and the most sacred truth which the heart of man can serve and the thought of man can entertain. And far above the elements of nobleness and beauty which the genius and skill of man have wrought into its workmanship I trust and pray that the consecrating nobleness and beauty of it may ever be that, in a world of change, and in a city singularly blessed in outward good by the providence of God, it stands devoted to the unchanging love of the Father of all spirits, who accepts and blesses the worship of the humble heart.



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